This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HN 6N26 Y

1G396

Boston Athenæum.

From the
Bromfield Fund.

CANCELLED

Received February 3, 1848.

EXTRACT FROM THE FOURTH BY-LAW RELATIVE TO TAKING BOOKS FROM THE ATHENÆUM LIBRARY.

"If any book shall be lost or injured,—*the writing of notes, comments, or other matter in a book shall be deemed an injury*,—the person to whom it stands charged shall replace it by a new volume or set."

MEMOIRS

OF

THE BEAUTIES

OF THE

COURT OF KING CHARLES THE SECOND,

WITH THEIR PORTRAITS.

VOL. I.

Painted by Sir Peter Lely.

Engraved by Tho: Wright

Member Mus. of the Imperial Acad. Petersburg and of Florence

"Nell" Gwynn"

MEMOIRS

OF

THE BEAUTIES

OF THE

COURT OF CHARLES THE SECOND,

WITH

THEIR PORTRAITS,

AFTER SIR PETER LELY AND OTHER EMINENT PAINTERS:

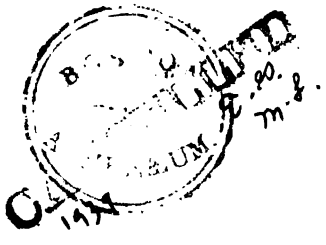
ILLUSTRATING

THE DIARIES OF PEPYS, EVELYN, CLARENDON,

AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY WRITERS.

BY MRS. JAMESON.

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
MDCCCXXXVIII.

HG 346 (1)

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
BY EXCHANGE

LONDON:
MAURICE, CLARK, AND CO., HOWFORD BUILDINGS,
FENCHURCH STREET.

PORTRAITS AND MEMOIRS

CONTAINED IN

THE FIRST VOLUME.

QUEEN CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA 37

THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND 69

THE COUNTESS DE GRAMMONT 101

THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY 123

LADY DENHAM 147

NELL GWYNN 157

ADVERTISEMENT.

In offering to the public a new edition of Mrs. Jameson's popular biographies of the "Beauties of the Court of Charles the Second," the publisher has endeavoured, in every possible way, to make it worthy of a still more extended patronage than that which has been already accorded to it. With this view, he has not only printed it in a more convenient form, but has caused it to be enlarged by considerable additions, both to the notes and text, and by an introductory Essay on the reign and character of Charles II. He trusts that the efforts thus made, will be received with the favour which it has been his object to merit.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

"A prince like a pear, which rotten at core is,
With a court that takes millions, and yet as Job poor is."

OLD SONG.

THE court of Charles the Second is very properly illustrated by the portraits of his ladies. It was by their secret influence that the most important affairs of state were directed, at their all-powerful nod ministers rose or fell, by their contrivance were effected foreign treaties, and the most weighty decisions of war or peace were determined by their intermediation. In the weak mind and hollow heart of Charles, a Castlemaine or a Portsmouth might always gain the mastery over the integrity of a Clarendon or an Ormond. It happens but too frequently, that when female influence is thus predominant in the cabinet, it is exercised by the worst portion of the fairer sex, and this was eminently the case in Charles's days, the avarice of whose mistresses robbed the country of its resources, and reduced the King himself to a disgraceful dependancy on France. Along with

foreign finery came in foreign licentiousness, and the court of Charles the Second, in this latter respect, presents a strong contrast to the stern morality of that of Cromwell. Fortunately, the debauchery of the gay cavaliers, and the lax virtue of the dames of Louis XIV., were too grating to the public feelings to take firm root in England; and, whilst the nation went on gradually increasing and improving upon the refinements which were now introduced, a few years saw the more objectionable fashions which had accompanied them disappear.

The joy which seemed to hail the accession of Charles to the throne of his father, was but the gleamy sunshine which often ushers in a gloomy overclouded day. Many people, tired of the uncertainties which had for some time filled their minds, hailed a change which seemed to promise them some settled government. The King was not brought in by the strength of his own party, but rather by the dissatisfaction of those unquiet people, who, irritated because the government was not moulded according to their own ideas and influenced by themselves, hastened the recall of the exiled monarch, that they might at least see the overthrow of the party of which they were jealous. They bore no love to Charles in their hearts, but they shouted at his elevation, because it was the downfall of the Protectorate. The leading men seized the occasion which they saw presented, and made their own advantage of it, by making their peace with the exile, and hurrying his restoration. But many of his best friends, who knew well his incapacity for the throne to which he was called, were not

without their fears of the future. Yet there were not wanting many also, who, in the warmth of their zeal, thought the joy of every body was as sincere as their own.

"This day," (29th May,) says Evelyn, "his majestie Charles the Second came to London, after a sad and long exile and calamitous suffering, both of the King and church, being 17 years. This was also his birth-day, and with a triumph of above 20,000 horse and foote, brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressible joy; the wayes strew'd with flowers, the belles ringing, the streetes hung with tapistry, fountaines running with wine; the maior, aldermen, and all the companies in their liveries, chaines of gold, and banners; lords and nobles clad in cloth of silver, gold, and velvet; the windowes and balconies all set with ladies; trumpets, music, and myriads of people flocking, even so far as from Rochester, so as they were seven houres in passing the citty, even from 2 in the afternoone till 9 at night.

"I stood in the Strand and beheld it, and bless'd God. And all this was don without one drop of bloud shed, and by that very army which rebell'd against him; but it was the Lord's doing, for such a restauration was never mention'd in any history, ancient or modern, since the returne of the Jewes from the Babylonish captivity; nor so joyfull a day and so bright ever seene in this nation, this hapning when to expect or effect it was past all human policy."*

* Evelyn's Diary, vol. ii., p. 148.

The night of this day, which drew forth so abundantly the pious thanksgivings of John Evelyn, the King passed in the company of Mrs. Palmer, so soon afterwards notorious as the Duchess of Cleveland; and immediately after, he issued a proclamation against debauchery. Pepys observes on the 4th of June, "This morning the King's proclamation against drinking, swearing, and debauchery, was read to our ships' companies in the fleet, and indeed *it gives great satisfaction to all.*"

The members of Charles's first administration were partly his staunch friends, who had followed him in his misfortunes, as Ormond, Hyde, (created soon after Earl of Clarendon,) and partly some of his new friends, who had at least the reputation of having been chiefly instrumental in his restoration, such as Monk, whom he created Duke of Albemarle, and Montague, created Earl of Sandwich. They were generally men who possessed, in comparison with his other favourites, and of those who succeeded them, a considerable degree of integrity or ability. Pepys gives us a curious insight into the temporizing policy of Sandwich ("his lord," as he styles him,) during the negotiations for the King's return, and confesses that he learnt, in a conversation with him, that as to religion he was "wholly sceptical." On another occasion Pepys speaks of him as going further than became him in flattering the King's vices. There can be no doubt, however, that Sandwich possessed sufficient virtue to render him obnoxious to the King's more immediate companions, and he gradually fell into disfavour and disgrace, till at last he was slain, fighting bravely,

in the great sea-fight in the May of 1672. On this occasion, Evelyn bursts into a flood of eloquence in lamenting the loss of his friend; "My Lord Sandwich was prudent as well as valiant, and always govern'd his affaires with successe and little losse; he was for deliberation and reason, they (Monk and Lord Clifford) for action and slaughter without either; and for this, whisper'd as if my Lord Sandwich was not so gallant because he was not so rash, and knew how fatal it was to loose a fleete, such as was that under his conduct, and for which these very persons would have censur'd him. Deplorable was the losse of one of the best accomplish'd persons, not onely of this nation, but of any other. He was learned in sea affaires, in politics, in mathematics, and in music; he had been on divers embassies, was of a sweete and obliging temper, sober, chast, very ingenious, a true nobleman, an ornament to the court and his prince, nor has he left any behind him who approach his many virtues."*

Edward Hyde, created soon afterwards Earl of Clarendon, was certainly a man of great ability; but he was not popular, and in the political songs of the day he is accused of unbounded avarice. Charles supported him, both in gratitude for a long series of faithful services, and because he thought that no other person was so capable of supporting the Restoration, and of enlarging the limits of his regal power.

Clarendon was virtually the head of the administra-

* Evelyn's Diary, vol. ii., p. 370.

tion with which Charles began his reign, and which was indeed kept together almost entirely by his influence, for the King's favour was bestowed secretly on men of a very different character and reputation. Charles had become gradually more and more the slave of Lady Castlemaine, and left his ministers to follow their own counsels whilst he spent his time with buffoons and debauchees; and his courtiers, who were preparing under female influence to stand at the head of the government, thought of nothing but fine clothes and petty intrigues. The want of personal security which every body felt under the Restoration, drove even the best men to consider only of making their profit of the present moment. Who can help smiling at the fears of Pepys, which he avows with so much *naïveté* in the November of 1660, on the occasion of a dinner at Sir William Batten's?—"Here dined with us two or three more country gentlemen; among the rest Mr. Christmas, my old school-fellow, with whom I had much talk. He did remember that I was a great Roundhead when I was a boy, and I was much afraid that he would have remembered the words that I said the day the King was beheaded, (that, were I to preach upon him, my text should be, 'The memory of the wicked shall rot;') but I found *afterwards that he did go away from school before that time!*"

In the August following, Pepys, who had hailed with so much satisfaction the blessings which at its outset, little more than a year before, the Restoration seemed to promise, observes of the state of things,—"At court

things are in a very ill condition, there being so much emulacion, poverty, and the vices of drinking, swearing, and loose amours, that I know not what will be the end of it, but confusion. And the clergy so high, that all people that I meet with do protest against their practice. In short, I see no content or satisfaction any where, in any one sort of people."

In the October of 1662, when the Chancellor (Clarendon) had lost not a little of what popularity he had, by the marriage of his daughter with the Duke of York, and by the part he had taken in the marriage of the King and in the reconciliation of the Queen with Lady Castlemaine, and when the influence of this termagant lady had been doubly strengthened by the Queen's submission, the administration which had been formed around Lord Clarendon began to give way. The Secretary of State, Sir Edward Nicholas, a man of great integrity, and one of the faithfullest friends of the King as well as of his father, was sacrificed to make place for Sir H. Bennet, afterwards known as the Earl of Arlington, a creature of Lady Castlemaine. The privy-purse was at the same time given to the custody of Sir Charles Berkeley, "a most vicious person, and one," says Pepys, "whom Mr. Pierce, the surgeon, did tell me that he offered his wife 300*l.* per annum to be his mistress. He also told me, that none in court had more the King's eare now than Sir Charles Berkeley, and Sir H. Bennet, and my Lady Castlemaine."

In its foreign negotiations, the government of Charles

the Second made a very different figure from that which had always been sustained by England during the Protectorate. Early in the new reign, the advantages which had been obtained by the latter were sold for money to supply the extravagance of the court. The parliament, at first so compliant with the King, became soon dissatisfied with his conduct, and distrustful of him, and gave him but small supplies, and that not without making many difficulties; the more so, because they saw that the ministers themselves were intent only upon filling their own purses as quickly as possible. It was observed in 1665, "for my Lord Treasurer, he minds his ease and lets things go how they will; if he can have his 8000*l.* per annum and a game at l'ombre, he is well. My Lord Chancellor, he minds getting of money and nothing else; and my Lord Ashly (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) will rob the devil and the altar, but he will get money if it be to be got." The mass of the people was equally distrustful as the parliament, and the assessments were collected with difficulty;* so that between the extrava-

* On the 9th November, 1663, Pepys gives an interesting account of the difference between Cromwell's soldiery, who had been disbanded, and those of the King, and describes the difficulties of getting in the revenue. "He (Mr. Blackburne) tells me, that the King, by name, with all his dignities, is prayed for by them that they call Fanatiques, as heartily and powerfully as in any of the other churches that are thought better: and that, let the King think what he will, it is them that must help him in the day of warr. For so generally they are the most substantiall sort of people, and the soberest; and did desire me to observe it to my Lord Sandwich, among other things, that of all the old army, now you cannot see a man begging about the streets; but what? You shall have this captain turned a shoemaker; the lieutenant, a baker; this, a brewer; that, a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in

gant profusion of the King and the unwillingness of the people to pay, the revenue of the kingdom was in a very low condition. The ministers therefore dreaded a war, when they had not sufficient money even to supply the private expenditure of the King, and the debts of the court were becoming continually heavier and more galling.

In 1665, the Dutch war broke out. The people of England were extremely irritated against the Hollanders, and a very large supply was voted by the parliament for the carrying on of the war. On the part of the English, the war was ill managed in every department. The

his apron and frock, &c., as if they never had done any thing else: whereas the other go with their belts and swords, swearing, and cursing, and stealing; running into people's houses, by force oftentimes, to carry away something; and this is the difference between the temper of one and the other; and concludes (and I think with some reason) that the spirits of the old parliament soldiers are so quiet and contented with God's providences, that the King is safe from any evil meant him by them, one thousand times more than from his own discontented cavaliers. And then to the publick management of business: it is done, as he observes, so loosely and so carelessly, that the kingdom can never be happy with it, every man looking after himself, and his own lust and luxury; and that half of what money the parliament gives the King is not so much as gathered. And to the purpose he told me how the Bellamys (who had some of the northern counties assigned them for their debt for the petty-warrant victualling) have often complained to him that they cannot get it collected, for that nobody minds, or if they do, they won't pay it in. Whereas (which is a very remarkable thing) he hath been told by some of the treasurers at warr here of late, to whom the most of the 120,000*l.* monthly was paid, that for most months the payments were gathered so duly, that they seldom had so much or more than 40*s.* or the like, short in the whole collection."

court was too busy about its own pleasures to allow its attention to be given to public business; the money was ill applied; and, after the King had squandered the enormous sum of 2,390,000*l.* amongst his mistresses and favourites, the war ended, in 1667, with disgrace. It is recorded, that when the Dutch fleet was employed in destroying the shipping in the Thames and the Medway, and threatening a still more serious invasion, Charles was employed with Lady Castlemaine in the interesting sport of hunting a moth!

Much of this waste of resources and ill management, was laid to the venality of Sir William Coventry, the treasurer of the navy. Denham, in one of his political poems, describes him as—

"Cerulian Coventry,
Keeper, or rather chancellor, of the sea. . . . .
To pay his fees the silver trumpet spends,
And boatswain's whistle for his place depends;
Pilots in vain repeat their compass o'er,
Until of him they learn that one point more,
The constant magnet to the pole doth hold,
Steel to the magnet, Coventry to gold.
Muscovy *sells* us pitch, and hemp, and tar;
Iron and copper, Sweden; Munster, war;
Ashly, prize; Warwick, custom; Carteret, pay;
But Coventry doth sell the fleet away."

But the tide of unpopularity, raised by the disadvantageous peace, after so much money and blood had been expended, fell heaviest on Lord Clarendon. Lady Castlemaine, who hated him because he had obstructed some of her extravagant whims, gave the King no rest till the Chancellor was dismissed from his office; and

then Charles's worthless companions congratulated him on being, at last, *his own master.*

Pepys has entered in his Diary a conversation with Evelyn in the spring of this year, (1667,) before the peace and the fall of the Chancellor, which gives a curious picture of the weak conduct of the "merry King."*

"Then," says he, "I took a turn with Mr. Evelyn; with whom I walked two hours, till almost one of the clock: talking of the badness of the government, where nothing but wickedness, and wicked men and women, command the King: that it is not in his nature to gainsay any thing that relates to his pleasures; that much of it arises from the sickliness of our Ministers of State, who cannot be about him as the idle companions are, and therefore he gives way to the young rogues; and then from the negligence of the clergy, that a bishop shall never be seen about him, as the King of France hath always; that the King would fain have some of the same gang to be Lord Treasurer, which would be yet worse, for now some delays are put to the getting gifts of the King, as Lady Byron, who had been, as he called it, the King's seventeenth mistress abroad, did not leave him till she had got him to give her an order for 4000*l.* worth of plate to be made for her; but by delays, thanks be to God! she died before she had it. * * * And Mr. Evelyn tells me of several of the menial servants of the court lacking bread, that have not received a farthing wages since the King's coming in. He

* Pepys, vol. iii., p. 201.

tells me the King of France hath his mistresses, but laughs at the foolery of our King, that makes his bastards princes, and loses his revenue upon them, and makes his mistresses his masters. And the King of France did never grant Lavaliere any thing to bestow on others."—"By the way," adds Pepys, "he tells me that of all the great men of England there is none that endeavours more to raise those that he takes into favour than my Lord Arlington; and that on that score, he is much more to be made one's patron than my Lord Chancellor, (Clarendon,) who never did, nor never will do any thing, but for money."

After the fall of Clarendon, all who would obtain great places were obliged to conciliate "Bab May, my Lady Castlemaine, and that wicked crew." The King was, however, in a difficult position; his parliament had been called together, and dismissed with the greatest dissatisfaction, and the whole country was in a ferment. Everybody disliked the peace; but no one wished for the continuation of the war, because they saw that it was so ill managed that it could bring nothing but disgrace. The government was deeply in debt; and the King was distressed for want of money; yet he dared not to call a parliament to vote supplies. At the same time, he loved too much his ease and his pleasures to take any decisive steps to make himself independent of his parliament, and he was continually vacillating between different counsels. Sometimes he was determined to send away Lady Castlemaine with a pension, and to conciliate the parliament; at others, his turbulent mis-

tress hectored him into obedience to, and his heartless courtiers laughed him into acquiescence in, worse advice. The sacrifice which he pretended to make to the parliament, but which in reality arose from other feelings, the disgrace of the Lord Chancellor, only served to render himself contemptible. Yet amid all this public dissatisfaction, and much public misery, the King was still "merry." Pepys, the valuable and amusing commentator on this reign, tells us a story in September, 1667, "how merry the King and Duke of York and court were the other day, when they were abroad a-hunting. They came to Sir G. Carteret's house at Cranbourne, and there were entertain'd, and all made drunk; and being all drunk, Armerer did come to the King, and swore to him by G—, 'Sir,' says he, 'you are not so kind to the Duke of York of late as you used to be.' 'Not I?' says the King, 'why so?'—'Why,' says he, 'if you are, let us drink his health.'—'Why let us,' says the King. Then he fell on his knees and drank it; and having done, the King began to drink it. 'Nay, sir,' says Armerer, 'by G—, you must do it on your knees!' So he did, and then all the company: and having done it, all fell a-crying for joy, being all maudlin and kissing one another, the King the Duke of York, and the Duke of York the King; and in such a maudlin pickle as never people were: and so passed the day."*

Up to this period, the public advisers of the King had been constantly changing for the worse; and at the time of Clarendon's impeachment, even Arlington and Coven-

* Pepys, vol. iii., pp. 362, 363.

try had fallen into some disfavour, and Buckingham and Bristol, two men devoid equally of principle or ability, were his chief counsellors. Buckingham had but recently been liberated from the Tower, at the command rather than persuasion of Lady Castlemaine, who called his sacred majesty a fool; but it was no long time after this that the minister showed his gratitude, by exerting all his power against the imperious mistress; and she also fell into disfavour, though it was only to make way for a still more shameless successor.

The cabal which governed after Clarendon's fall, was composed of men entirely unfit for any other business but that of administering to the King's pleasures. The Diary of Pepys contains many sneers at the ignorance and imbecility which they exhibited in council. In proportion with the weakness of the court, the boldness and resoluteness of the House of Commons increased, and the session in which Clarendon was banished struck such a fear into all the courtiers, that they did not dare to face another for a long time, and were in continual apprehensions.* Multitudes of people, who had been the warmest advocates of the Restoration, began to regret the days of the Commonwealth, and the very members of the House of Commons, in their speeches,

* In 1668, Pepys observes, "It is pretty to see how careful these great men are to do every thing so as they may answer it to the parliament, thinking themselves safe in nothing but where the judges (with whom they often advise) do say the matter is doubtful; and so they take upon themselves then to be the chief persons to interpret what is doubtful."—Pepys, vol. iv., p. 119.

frequently contrasted the acts of Charles's government with those of Cromwell.*

Buckingham, now the King's favourite and chief minister, was a mad debauchee, as destitute of ability as of conduct. While Prime Minister of the crown, he had seduced the Countess of Shrewsbury, and kept her as his mistress. The earl challenged him, and each came to the field with two companions, one of whom was killed on the spot, and Shrewsbury received a wound of which he died shortly after. From this time he lived publicly with the countess. In the May of 1668, Pepys notes that "the Countesse of Shrewsbery is brought home by the Duke of Buckingham to his house; where his duchesse saying that it was not for her and the other to live together in a house, he answered, 'Why,

* Feb. 14, 1667-8, "Secretary Morrice did this day, in the House, when they talked of intelligence, say that he was allowed but 700*l.* a-year for intelligence: whereas, in Cromwell's time, he did allow 70,000*l.* a-year for it; and was confirmed therein by Colonell Birch, who said that thereby Cromwell carried the secrets of all the princes of Europe at his girdle."—*Pepys*, iii., 41. Feb. 17. "Great high words in the House. . . The King's bad intelligence was mentioned, wherein they were bitter against my Lord Arlington, saying, among other things, that whatever Morrice's was, who declared he had but 750*l.* a-year allowed him for intelligence, the King paid too dear for my Lord Arlington's, in giving him 10,000*l.* and a barony for it."—iii., 42. Feb. 21. "'The House this day is still as backward for giving any money as ever, and do declare they will first have an account of the disposals of the last Poll-bill and eleven months' tax. And it is pretty odde, that the very first sum mentioned in the account brought in by Sir Robert Long of the disposal of the Poll-bill money, is 5000*l.* to my Lord Arlington for intelligence; which was mighty unseasonable, so soon after they had so much cried out against his want of intelligence."—Vol. iii., 46.

madam, I did think so, and therefore have ordered your coach to be ready to carry you to your father's:' which was a devilish speech, but, they say, true; and my Lady Shrewsbery is there, it seems." Four months after this, we have an anecdote highly characteristic of the unbounded arrogance and insolence of this minister, then in the plenitude of his power. "Buckingham now rules all; and the other day, in the King's journey he is now in, at Bagshot and that way, he caused Prince Rupert's horses to be turned out of an inne, and caused his own to be kept there, which the prince complained of to the King, and the Duke of York seconded the complaint; but the King did over-rule it for Buckingham, by which there are high displeasures among them; and Buckingham and Arlington rule all."

Amidst the senseless measures of his ministers, and the increasing indignation of his people, Charles still lived easily and "merrily" with his vicious and debasing companions. The squabbles of his mistresses caused more troubles than the dangers of the state. A ridiculous circumstance happened at court in the beginning of 1669, which caused hot blood, and raised high factions, "even to the sober engaging of great persons."—"It is about my Lady Harvy's being offended at Doll Common's acting of *Sempronia*, to imitate her; for which she got my Lord Chamberlain, (the Duke of Buckingham,) her kinsman, to imprison Doll: upon which my Lady Castlemaine made the King to release her, and to order her to act it again worse than ever, the other day, where the King himself was; and since it was acted

again, and my Lady Harvy provided people to hiss her, and fling oranges at her; but it seems the heat is come to a great height, and real troubles at court about it."

The ambition of the King's ministers, and the apprehensions of future retribution for the many extravagant and criminal measures of which they had been the authors, drove them to seek gratification and safety by desperate projects. The invaluable Diary of Pepys, which throws so much light both on the temper of the people, and on the secret intrigues of the court, closes with the year 1669; but during that year we find several notices, which show that the measures which were only fully developed a few years later, had already been privately resolved. The King and his ministers had conciliated no party in the state; the latter could only escape punishment so long as they kept the power to avoid, or rather delay it, in their own hands, and there was nothing they feared so much as the meeting of parliament. On the 21st of April, Pepys observes, "Sir H. Cholmley told me that now the great design of the Duke of Buckingham is to prevent the meeting, since he cannot bring about with the King the dissolving of this parliament, that the King may not need it; and therefore my Lord St. Albans (the ambassador in France) is hourly expected, with great offers of a million of money, to buy our breach with the Dutch; and this, they do think, may tempt the King to take the money, and thereby be out of a necessity of calling the parliament again, which these people dare not suffer to meet again: but this he doubts, and so do I, that it will be the ruin of the nation if we fall out with Holland."

On the 28th of the same month, Pepys learned in conversation with the same person, "that it is brought almost to effect, the late endeavours of the Duke of York and Duchesse, the Queene-mother,* and my Lord St. Albans, together with some of the contrary faction, as my Lord Arlington, that for a sum of money we shall enter into a league with the King of France, wherein, he says, my Lord Chancellor† is also concerned; and that he believes that in the doing hereof, it is meant that he shall come in again, and that this sum of money will so help the King, as that he will not need the parliament; and that in that regard, it will be forwarded by the Duke of Buckingham and his faction, who dread the parliament. But hereby we must leave the Dutch, and that I doubt will undo us."

That Louis XIV. was at this time preparing to make Charles an instrument of his all-grasping ambition there is no doubt, and it was not many months after that a secret treaty was entered into, by which the King and his ministry hoped to make themselves independent of the parliament. Yet the only thing which Charles really gained by the alliance was a new mistress, the too celebrated Duchess of Portsmouth. Besides the prospect it afforded of the ultimate gratification of their ambition, the English courtiers seem pretty generally to have filled their pockets with French money, and a war with Holland was resolved on. The first act of hostilities was an unprovoked and disgraceful aggression on the

* Henrietta Maria, who is said to have been secretly married to the Duke of St. Albans.

† Clarendon, who was living in banishment.

part of the King of England. In the beginning of 1672, before any war had been commenced or proclaimed, the King sent out what can be considered as no better than a piratical expedition to seize on the Dutch Smyrna fleet, which was said to be worth a million and a half of money. The avarice of the King was excited by the richness of the prize; and so little scrupulous was he or his agents in the means they employed to effect their purpose, that the Dutch officers were invited on board the English fleet to a friendly repast, that their convoy might be seized with the less difficulty. But the latter were on their guard, the English were repulsed, and the expedition ended in nothing but disgrace. Another arbitrary measure to obtain money, the closing of the Exchequer, ruined thousands of his subjects, and destroyed entirely the confidence of the merchants and moneyed men.

"Now," says Evelyn, (a zealous royalist,) on the 12th of March, "was the first blow given by us to the Dutch convoy of the Smyrna fleete, by Sir Robert Holmes and Lord Ossorie, in which we received little, save blows and worthy reproach, for attacking our neighbours ere any war was proclaim'd; and then pretending the occasion to be, that some time before, the Merlin yatcht chancing to saile thro' the whole Dutch fleete, their Admiral did not strike to that trifling vessel. Surely this was a quarrel slenderly grounded, and not becoming Christian neighbours. We are like to thrive accordingly. Lord Ossorie several times deplor'd to me his being engaged in it; he had more justice and honour

than in the least to approve of it, tho' he had been over persuaded to the expedition.* There is no doubt but we should have surpriz'd this exceeding rich fleete, had not the avarice and ambition of Holmes and Sprag separated themselves, and wilfully divided our fleete, on presumption that either of them was strong enough to deale with the Dutch convoy without joyning and mutual help; but they so warmly plied our divided fleets, that whilst in conflict the merchants sailed away, and got safe into Holland.

"A few daies before this, the Treasurer of the Household, Sir Tho. Clifford, hinted to me as a confident, that his majesty would *shut up the Exchequer*, (and accordingly his majesty made use of infinite treasure there, to prepare for an intended rupture); but, says he, it will soone be open againe and every body satisfied; for this bold man, who had been the sole adviser of the King to invade that sacred stock, (tho' some pretend it was Lord Ashley's counsel, then Chancellor of the Exchequer,) was so over confident of the successe of this unworthy designe against the Smyrna merchants, as to put his majesty on an action which not onely lost the hearts of

* Evelyn has again, on another occasion, recorded the indignation of the gallant and virtuous Earl of Ossory at this action. "One thing more let me note, that he often express'd to me the abhorrence he had of that base and unworthy action which he was put upon, of engaging the Smyrna fleete in time of peace, in which tho' he behav'd himself like a greate captain, yet he told me it was the onely blot in his life, and troubled him exceedingly. Though he was commanded, and never examin'd further when he was so, yet he always spoke of it with regret and detestation."—Vol. iii., p. 31.

his subjects, and ruined many widows and orphans whose stocks were lent him, but the reputation of his exchequer for ever, it being before in such credit, that he might have commanded halfe the wealth of the nation.

"The credit of this bank being thus broken, did exceedingly discontent the people, and never did his majesty's affairs prosper to any purpose after it, for as it did not supply the expense of the meditated war, *so it mealted away, I know not how.*"

With the exception of Buckingham, the King's ordinary companions, such as Rochester, Killigrew, &c., were men who never troubled him with business, or meddled in it themselves, and their names seldom appear in history. Charles was a man who cared too much for his own interest to think for a moment of that of any body else, but he was too intent on his pleasures even to take the trouble to look after his interest. Hence he left all to the management of his favourites. When, however, to secure his own ease, he found it necessary to conciliate his parliament, he never scrupled a moment to sacrifice his best favourite to attain his end. The cabal which governed after Clarendon's fall, hoped to secure themselves by rendering the King absolute and independent of the parliament. It was certainly a wild scheme, and rather a dangerous one, but they trusted much in the aid of France, whom they were to appease by the sacrifice of Holland. The Dutch war was carried on with ill success on the part of England, although Louis XIV. was gaining great advantages by

it. In the great naval fight of Solebay, in 1672, was lost the Earl of Sandwich; and shortly after, the want of money and the discontent of the people, obliged the King to make a separate peace with the Dutch, which he excused to Louis, whose pensioner he was become, as well as he could. In the session of parliament, which was now called together, the expression of discontent and indignation was so unanimous and so formidable, that the King, who was now arrived at the point where he must either be master of the parliament or give in, slunk from the struggle in defeat. The ministers were in dismay, and began to think of saving themselves by joining the popular party. The history of the remainder of his reign, till the secret treaty with France, presents one series of attempts by the King, not to awe the parliament, but to cheat it by every species of falsehood and duplicity possible. The parliament, however, had no longer any faith in his promises; they were well aware, that when he came to them and asked for supplies, promising them *on his royal word and honour* that it was to support a war against France, he was secretly making a league with France to use the money in subverting the best interests of his own country. Every trifling circumstance raised the suspicion of the popular party, and new heats were blown up continually; until at last, when his own constitution was beginning to give way by his irregular life, and he was not able to live and enjoy the advantages of it, he went so far as to sell the freedom of his country to the French King for a pension, which should enable him to go on without calling a parliament at all. The first

part of Charles's reign, which may rather be called the reign of Lady Castlemaine, was fruitful enough in calamities to the country, when the resources of the state were consumed in waste and debauchery; but the reign of the Duchess of Portsmouth struck more deeply at the roots of English liberty and independence, though happily the folly of the court party was itself continually thwarting and rendering inefficient the blow.

A great cause of the violent heats and factions which arose during the latter part of Charles's reign, was the discovery that the Duke of York and several of the ministers had turned to the Catholic religion, and the not ill-founded suspicion that there was a plot to change the religion, as well as to overthrow the liberties of the country. The bloody proceedings on Titus Oates's plot are now scarcely conceivable; but if we consider the extreme apprehensions under which every body then laboured, we shall have no difficulty in accounting for their having been thus carried away by the passion of the moment. It is probable, however, that the violence of these proceedings contributed, more than any other thing, to the patience with which the nation bore the tyrannical proceedings of the court during the King's last years, and to the quiet accession of the Duke of York.

The period of arbitrary government which followed Charles's last parliament, was distinguished by a plot not much less sanguinary than that of Titus Oates, which afforded the court a pretence for making away with some of the most influential of its opponents.

"After the Popish plot," observes Evelyn on the 28th of June, 1683, "there was now a new, and (as they called it) a Protestant plot discover'd, that certaine lords and others should designe the assassination of the King and the Duke as they were to come from Newmarket, with a general rising of the nation, and especially of the citty of London, disaffected to the present government; upon which were committed to the Tower the Lord Russell, eldest son of the Earle of Bedford, the Earle of Essex, Mr. Algernon Sydney, son to the old Earle of Leicester, Mr. Trenchard, Hampden, Lord Howard of Escrick, and others. A proclamation was issued against my Lord Grey, the Duke of Monmouth, Sir Thomas Armstrong, and one Ferguson, who had escaped beyond sea..... The Lords Essex and Russell were much deplor'd, few believing they had any evil intention against the King or the church; some thought they were cunningly drawn in by their enemies, for not approving some late councils and management relating to France, to popery, to the persecution of the dissenters, &c."*

The pretended plot was discovered by Lord Howard, a man of no principle, who was supposed to have shared in their councils. There was no evidence of any value against them; but Jeffreys was the judge, and they were persons whom the King wished to be rid of. Essex was found in the Tower with his throat cut; Russell was first executed, and afterwards Sydney, who was convicted on his reputation of a republican, and on a piece of paper found in his study, written long before, and

* Evelyn, vol. iii., pp. 85, 86.

said to contain republican doctrines. Monmouth surrendered himself shortly after, and was persuaded by the King and the Duke of York to confess a plot before the council; on which condition he received his pardon, but he immediately made public declaration that there was no plot at all.

Most people lamented the fate of Russell and Sydney. Of the many libels against the court, composed and distributed on this occasion, the following '*new song of the times*' is a fair specimen, and is not devoid of wit.

"'Twere folly for ever
The Whigs* to endeavour
Disowning their plots, when all the world knows 'em:
Did they not fix
On a council of six,†
Appointed to govern, though nobody chose 'em?
They, that bore sway,
Knew not one who'd obey,
Did Trincalo make such a ridiculous pother?
Monmouth's the head,
To strike monarchy dead,
They chose themselves viceroys each o'er one another.

Was it not a damn'd thing,
That Russell and Hambden
Should serve all the projects of hot-headed Tony?
But much more untoward,
To appoint my Lord Howard
Of his own purse and credit to raise men and money?

---

* *Whig* was the term by which the party opposed to the aggressions of the court began now generally to be designated.

† The council of six were Monmouth, Russell, Essex, Howard, Sydney, and John Hambden, the latter being the grandson of the parliamentary leader.

Who at Knightsbridge did hide
Those *brisk boys* unspy'd,
That at Shaftesbury's whistle were ready to follow;*
But when aid he should bring,
Like a true Brentford king,
He was here with a whoop, and there with a hollo.

Algernon Sydney,
Of Commonwealth kidney,
Composed a damn'd libel, (ay, marry was it,)
Writt to occasion
Ill blood in the nation,
And therefore dispers'd it all over his closet.
It was not the writing
Was prov'd, or inditing;
And though he urg'd statutes, what was it but fooling?
Since a new trust is
Plac'd in the Chief-justice,
To damn law and reason too by over-ruling.†

And what if a traitor,
In spite of the state, sir,
Should cut his own throat from one ear to the other?‡

---

* The Earl of Shaftesbury is said to to have been the first instigator of the plot, but, irritated and in despair at the dilatoriness of the conspirators, to have fled to Holland, where he died. But, in remonstrating, he had previously "threatened to commence the insurrection with his friends in the city alone; and he boasted that he had ten thousand *brisk boys*, as he called them, who, on a motion of his finger, were ready to fly to arms."—*Hume.*

† Whenever the prisoners made legal objections, the plea was invariably *over-ruled* by the judge.

‡ From the extraordinary manner in which the Earl of Essex's throat was cut, it was believed by many that he had been murdered. "Yet it was wondered by some," says Evelyn, "how it was possible he should do it in the manner he was found, for the wound was so deep, and wide, that being cut through the gullet, wind-pipe, and both the jugulars, it reached to the very vertebræ of the neck, so that the head held to it by a very little skin as it were; the gapping, too, of the razor, and cutting

Shall then a new freak
Make Braddon and Speak
To be more concerned than his wife or his brother?
A razor all bloody,
Thrown out of a study,
Is evidence strong of his desperate guilt, sir,
So Godfrey* when dead,
Full of horror and dread,
Run his sword through his body up to the hilt, sir.

All Europe together
Can't show such a father,
So tenderly nice of his son's reputation,
As our good King is,
Who labours to bring his
By tricks to subscribe to a sham declaration.
'Twas very good reason,
To pardon his treason,
To obey (not his own, but) his brother's command, sir,
To merit whose grace,
He must in the first place
Confess he's dishonest under his hand, sir.

The Rye-House conspiracy, for so this plot was called, was made to appear far more than it really was. The illegal and unjustifiable manner in which the trials of the prisoners were carried on, seems to show that the court was aware that there was no legal evidence whatever to condemn them: people in general beheld the executions with distaste and indignation, and six years afterwards,

his owne fingers, was a little strange; but more, that having pass'd the jugulars, he should have strength to proceed so far, that an executioner could hardly have done more with an axe. There were odd reflections upon it."—Vol. iii., p. 87. "Two children affirmed that they heard a great noise from his window, and that they saw a hand throw out a bloody razor."—*Hume.*

* Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, who was found murdered with his sword run through his body, at the beginning of the trials about the plot of Titus Oates.

when the bigotry and tyranny of Charles's successor had paved the way to the revolution, the judgment was reversed, and the whole declared a murder. Evelyn, who was equally bigoted in his hatred to catholics and dissenters as in his loyalty, expresses the same incredulity in the Rye-House Plot, as in that of Titus Oates. "The public," he observes on the 14th July, 1683, "was now in greater consternation on the late plot and conspiracy; his majestie very melancholy, and not stirring without double guards; all the avenues and private dores about White-hall and the Park shut up, few admitted to walke in it. The papists in the meane time very jocond, and indeede with reason, seeing their own plot brought to nothing, and turn'd to ridicule, and now a conspiracy of protestants as they call'd them."

The King lived scarcely two years after the discovery of this plot, and three after the infamous bargain with France, whereby he had sold the liberty of his country in exchange for a pension for himself. During that period, all the acts of the court were directed to the same point at which James the Second aimed more openly, the establishment of the Popish religion and arbitrary government. Charles the Second ended his reign as he began it,—a heartless libertine and a hypocrite. On the twenty-fifth of January, 1685, when he was fifty-four years old, Evelyn was at court, and, it being a Sunday, was shocked at the debauchery and profaneness which was there exhibited. "I saw this evening such a scene of profuse gaming, and the King in the midst of his three concubines, (Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine,) as

I had never before seen. Luxurious dallying and prophaneness." On the 6th of February the King died, in the profession of the Roman Catholic religion, to which, up to the last moment, he had made a public show of being averse.

The numerous libels published during the latter part of Charles's reign, point to the Duke of York as the chief abettor of the arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings of the court, and, to all appearance, not without good reason. In his mind, the Popish religion seems to have planted all its worst principles, without intermixing with them any of the good Christian feelings of which every sect possesses its share. On his accession to the crown, all the evil tendencies of the faith which he had embraced began to show themselves still more openly. During a reign of three years and a few months, he contrived to insult and despise every party, to interfere with every body's privileges and rights, and so entirely to lose the love of his own subjects, that when the revolution broke out, there was not a person to hold up a hand in his favour.

INTRODUCTION.

"In days of ease, when now the weary sword
Was sheathed, and luxury with Charles restor'd,
In every taste of foreign courts improved,
All by the King's example lived and loved.
The soldier breathed the gallantries of France,
And every flowery courtier writ romance:
Lely on animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul." POPE.

IT is the peculiar privilege of the Portrait-painter to immortalize BEAUTY, to give duration to the most perishable of Heaven's gifts, and bestow upon the Fair "a thousand years of bloom." When the poet has done his utmost to describe the charms which kindled his fancy and inspired his song; when, in the divine spirit of his art, he has arrayed

"The thing he doats upon with colouring
Richer than roses, brighter than the beams
Of the clear sun at morning;"

when he has decked out the idol of his imagination in all the pomp of words, and similes culled from whatever is sweetest and loveliest in creation—the bloom of flowers, the freshness of the dawn, the breathings of the spring, and the sparkling of the stars,—he has but given us the elements out of which we compose a

Beauty, each after a fashion and fancy of our own. Painting alone can place before us the personal identity of the poet's divinity,—made such by the superstition of love. When the historian has told us that Mark Antony lost the world for a woman, and sold an empire for Cleopatra's smile, his eloquence can go no further: the record of her beauty lives upon his page,—her beauty itself only in the faith of our imagination. What would we not give to gaze indeed upon that "brow of Egypt,"—

"The love, the spell, the bane of Antony,"

such as the pencil of Arellius might have transmitted it to us!

It is true, that when the personage is purely ideal and poetical, we do not willingly part with the imaginary form which has been stamped upon our individual fancy, for any imitative semblance. We have no desire to see a portrait of the lady in *Comus*, or the Jewess Rebecca, or Gulnare, or Corinne, or Mignonne. In these and similar instances, the best of painters will scarce equal either the creation of the poet, or its vivid reflection in our own minds: but where the personage is real or historical, the feeling is reversed; we ask for truth even at the risk of disappointment, and are willing to exchange the vaguely beautiful figure which has dwelt upon our fancy, for the defined reality, however different and, in all probability, inferior.

When lingering in a gallery of pictures, with what eagerness of attention do we approach a portrait of

Mary Stuart, or Lucrezia d'Este, or Tasso's Leonora! Lady Sunderland* and Lady Bridgewater might have hung and mouldered upon the walls of Blenheim, of no more regard than other dowagers of quality, if Waller had not sung the disdainful charms of the first, and Pope celebrated the eyes and the virtues of the latter. Yet, on the other hand, were it not for Vandyke and Kneller, we should scarce have sympathized in Waller's complaints of "Sacharissa's haughty scorn," or understood the influence of "Bridgewater's eyes." If the portrait sometimes derives from the poet or historian its best value, the beauty of the portrait as often makes us turn with redoubled interest to the page of the poet. After looking at the picture of Hortense Mancini in the Stafford Gallery, we take down St. Evremond with added zest: and who has not known what it is to pause before some beautiful 'portrait unknown' of Titian or Vandyke, with a sigh of baffled interest? calling upon our imagination to supply the lack of tradition, and asking such questions as Lord Byron asks of Cecilia Metella, with as little possibility of being satisfied,—

> "Was she chaste and fair?—
> What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
> What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
> How lived, how loved, how died she?"

Or, who ever gazed upon the portrait at Windsor of Venetia Digby, without a devouring, but vain curiosity to pierce the mystery of her story and her fate? The silence of the grave rests upon both. A few scattered

* The *elder* Lady Sunderland, Lady Dorothea Sidney.

and contradictory notices, and all that painting could express of the matchless beauties of her face and form, remain to us: dust and an endless darkness have swallowed up the rest!*

"Lely alone," says Walpole, "can excuse the gallantries of Charles: he painted an apology for that Asiatic court:"—bear witness these lovely forms, which his pencil has rescued from death and fate, and preserved to us even in the loveliest looks they wore on earth:—

> "Redundant are those locks, those lips as fair,
> As when their breath enriched Thessalian air."

But, says Morality, and frowns, How is the world or posterity benefited by celebrating the charms and the errors of these fair pieces of sin and mischief, who ought rather to do penance with their faces to the wall, than thus boldly attempt to dazzle and blind our severer judgment by the blaze of their attractions? Or, if they must needs be preserved as valuable works of art, why

* Venetia Digby was the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby: the emblematical accompaniments of her picture cannot now be explained or understood. She was of noble—of the noblest blood: her father was a Stanley; her mother, Lady Lucy Percy: yet Aubrey calls her a *courtesan*. She married Sir Kenelm Digby while yet very young; and at the age of thirty was found dead, her head resting on her hand, in the attitude of one asleep. Some said she was poisoned by her husband through jealousy; others that her death was caused by certain medicaments and preparations he had administered to enhance the power of her charms, of which he was enamoured even to madness.

Sir Kenelm Digby was not only the handsomest man and most accomplished cavalier of his time, but a statesman, a courtier, a philosopher, and a dabbler in judicial astrology and alchymy.

should we not gaze upon them merely as such? While thus they smile upon us from the almost breathing canvas, serene in their silent beauty, why should we be forced to remember that faces so fair were ever stained by passion, or clouded by grief, or wrinkled by time? If the severe historian must needs stain his page with that disgraceful era of profligacy and blood, as a record and a warning to future ages, let the poet forget it,—let the lover forget it; above all, let women forget the period which saw them degraded from objects of adoration to servants of pleasure, and gave the first blow to that chivalrous feeling with which their sex had hitherto been regarded, by levelling the distinction between the unblemished matron and her who was the "ready spoil of opportunity." Let them be the first to fling a veil over what woman should shrink to look upon, and exclaim, like Claire when she threw the pall over the perishing features of Julie,—"Maudite soit l'indigne main qui jamais soulevera ce voile!"

This would be well, if it were possible; but it is not. Of late a variety of causes have combined to fix the public attention upon the age of Charles the Second; and to render interesting every circumstance connected with his court and reign. Common gallantry requires that we should no longer suffer the Beauties of that day to be libelled by the caricature resemblances which have hitherto, by way of illustrating, deformed the editions of De Grammont; it is due to the good taste of Charles, to give him the full benefit of the excuse which Lely's pencil afforded him; and, lastly, common justice,

not only to the dead, but the living, requires that the innocent should not be confounded with the guilty. Most of those who visit the Gallery of Beauties at Windsor, leave it with the impression that they have been introduced into a set of kept-mistresses. Truly, it seems hard that such women as Lady Northumberland, Miss Hamilton, Lady Ossory, whose fair reputations no slanderous wit dared to profane while living, should be condemned to posthumous dishonour, because their pictures hang in the same room with those of Middleton and Denham.

It is difficult to touch upon the female influence of Charles's reign, without being either betrayed into an unbeseeming levity, or assuming a tone of unseasonable severity: yet thus much may be said; the Memoirs, which have been collected to illustrate these beautiful Portraits, have been written without any design of raking up forgotten scandal, or varnishing over vice: and equally without any presumptuous idea of benefiting the world and posterity; but certainly not without a deep feeling of the lesson they are fitted to convey. Virtue is scarcely virtue, till it has stood the test: a woman who could pass through the ordeal of such a court as that of Charles the Second unstained in person and in reputation, may be supposed to have possessed a more than common share of innate virtue and feminine dignity; and she who stooped to folly, at least left no temptation to others to follow her example. When, from the picture of Castlemaine, in her triumphant beauty, we turn to her last years and her death, there

lies in that transition a deeper moral than in twenty sermons: let woman lay it to her heart.

* * * * *

But a lighter and a gayer subject demands the pen. The obvious connexion between beauty and dress, and the influence of the reigning fashions upon the style of the portrait-painter, render it necessary to say a few words of the costume of Charles the Second's time, as illustrative of the following Portraits and Memoirs.

At the period of the Restoration, and for some years afterwards, the style of dress retained something of the picturesque elegance of Charles the First's time. French fashions prevailed indeed, more or less, during the whole of the succeeding reign: French tailors, milliners, hair-dressers, and tire-women were then, as now, indispensable; but it was not till a later period, after a secret and disgraceful treaty had made Charles a pensioned creature of France, that the English court became, in dress and manners, a gross and caricatured copy of the court of Louis the Fourteenth. Before the introduction of perukes, men as well as women wore their hair long and curling down their shoulders: the women, in particular, had their tresses artfully arranged in elaborate ringlets, partly loose, or confined to the back of the head by jewels or knots of riband, as in the portraits of Lady Northumberland and Lady Rochester. The general effect was graceful and feminine; till, like other fashions, it was carried to an excess, and artificial curls were worn to supply the want or scarcity of natural hair. The men wore coats of cloth, velvet, or serge;

and, in full dress, of gold and silver tissue, richly slashed and covered with embroidery: large bows of riband of various colours, wherever they could be placed—on the shoulders, at the breast, at the knees, at the sword-hilt, distinguished the "ruffling gallants" of the court.* The dress of the ladies was, in material, rich silk or satin, sometimes brocaded with gold and silver;† and consisted of a long boddice fitted to the shape, and cut low in the bosom, a tucker or laced chemise appearing above. This boddice was open down the front, and fastened with brooches of jewels, or knots of riband, or *crevés*, as in the portraits of the Duchess of Richmond and Lady Sunderland. The skirt was worn full with many plaits, and sufficiently short to show the ankles: the sleeves were generally full, long, and very wide, gathered and looped up high in front with jewels; and showing beneath a white sleeve of fine linen or cambric, embroidered or trimmed with lace. This must have been rather an inconvenient fashion; but very graceful in appearance, and calculated to set off a beautiful arm to the greatest possible advantage.

The custom of patching the face prevailed about this

* Evelyn humorously alludes to this extravagant fashion. "He met," he says, "a fine thing in Westminster Hall, that had as much riband about him as would have plundered six shops, and set up twenty pedlars: a frigate, newly rigged, kept not half such a clatter in a storm as this puppet's streamers did, when the wind was in his shrouds."—*Tyrannus, or the Mode—Evelyn's Memoirs*, vol. ii.

† Pepys mentions, that his wife and Lady Castlemaine purchased a dress off the same piece of silk, for which they paid 15*s.* a-yard: this is, as if a lady of these days were to pay three guineas a-yard for a gown.

time, and continued till the days of the *Spectator;* when, as we are told, the Tory ladies patched on one side of the face, and those of the Whig persuasion on the other; till Addison's exquisite raillery rendered both patching and party-spirit unfashionable. Shoe-buckles were now first introduced, instead of the large roses of riband formerly worn; and green stockings were affected by some of the court ladies, for reasons which politeness forbids us to mention—except in a note.* Every one who has read De Grammont, will recollect the green stockings of the beautiful Lady Chesterfield, which made the Duke of York swear so gallantly, that there was "point de salut sans des bas verts."

In 1666, the King, in order to repress the increasing luxury of dress, and, as Mr. Pepys expresses it, "to teach the nobility thrift," declared in council his design of adopting a certain habit, which he was resolved never to alter. It consisted of a long close vest of black cloth or velvet, pinked with white satin; a loose coat over it of the Polish fashion; and, instead of shoes and stockings, buskins or brodequins.† Some of the young cour-

* Elle l'a (la jambe) grosse et courte, poursuivit-il, et pour diminuer ses défauts autant que cela se peut, elle ne porte presque jamais que des bas verts.—*De Grammont.*

† See Echard's History of England, vol. ii., p. 836, and Evelyn's Memoirs.

"Oct. 8th. The King hath yesterday in council declared his resolution of setting a fashion for clothes, which he will never alter; it will be a vest: I know not well how, but it will teach the nobility thrift, and will do good."

"17th. The court is all full of vests, only my Lord St. Albans

tiers, aware of the King's versatility, laid wagers with him that he would not continue in this fashion beyond a certain time, which proved to be the case. "It was," says Evelyn, "a comely and a manly habit; too good to hold, it being impossible for us to leave the Monsieur's vanities long."

The use of ladies' riding-habits, or Amazonian habits as they were termed, was introduced in this reign. It was the custom for the Queen and the Maids of Honour to accompany the King in his hawking parties, mounted upon fine horses, and attended by the courtiers. To ride well, was then an admired female accomplishment: it appears that the peculiar grace with which Miss Stewart sat and managed her horse, was one of her principal attractions in the eyes of the King; and that Miss Churchill had nearly lost the heart of the Duke of York by her equestrian awkwardness.

Cocked hats, laced with gold, and trimmed with white, black, and red feathers, were worn by both sexes. Pepys records his admiration of Miss Stewart in her "cocked hat and red plume," as she returned from riding. A particularly smart and knowing cock of the hat was assumed by the young gallants, called the "Monmouth cock," after the Duke of Monmouth.

In the latter part of Charles's reign, the close and

(Jermyn) not pinked, but plain black; and they say the King says that the pinking upon white, makes them look too much like magpies; so hath bespoke one of plain velvet."—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 471.

disgraceful connexion between the French and English courts delivered us up to French interests, French politics, and French fashions. This was the era of those enormous perukes, which in the succeeding reigns of William and Anne attained to such a preposterous size.* Mustachios on the upper lip disappeared from court, but were not finally abolished till the succeeding reign. At this time, the exposure of the neck and shoulders was carried to such a shameless extreme, that even women of character and reputation scarcely affected a superficial decency of attire. Painting the face, which had declined since Queen Elizabeth's time, was again introduced from France, and became a fashion. Hoods of various colours were worn, and long trains, which caused, very unreasonably, almost as much scandal as the meretricious display of the person.† Women,

* They were first worn by a Duke of Anjou, to conceal a personal deformity, and adopted by the court in compliment to him. In the same spirit, when Philip of Macedon was wounded in the forehead, all his courtiers walked about with bandages round their heads.

† In the Preface to a curious religious Tract, entitled "A just and seasonable reprehension of the enormity of naked breasts and shoulders," published by a Non-conformist Divine, but translated, as the title sets forth, from the French of a grave and learned Papist, these long trains are censured, with much spiritual indignation, as "a monstrous superfluity of cloth or silk that must be dragged after them, or carried by another, or fardelled behind them." There is an anecdote of a lady of that time, who being forbidden, by court etiquette, to bring her train-bearers into the Queen's presence, had her train made long enough to reach into the anti-chamber.

[The inconvenient fashion of long trains belonged properly to an earlier, more stiff and formal, and less civilized period. During the fourteenth, and part of the fifteenth centuries, they were most enormous,

instead of wearing long ringlets clustering down the neck, began to frizzle up their hair like periwigs, as in the portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth. It is remarkable, that the elevation, decline, and fall of the female coiffure, comprised exactly a century. It began to rise between 1680 and 1690; rose gradually for the next fifty years; and reached its extremest height toward the end of George the Second's reign, when it absolutely emulated the tower of Babel: from that time it declined by slow degrees, and about the period of the French Revolution, the heads of our women began to assume their natural shape and proportion.

Other fashions and tastes of Charles's time may be dismissed in a few words. The King, from spending his youth abroad, and perhaps in earlier years from his mother, had imbibed a decided partiality for the language and literature of France; and after his return to the throne, French became the fashionable language at court. The patriotic Evelyn inveighs against this innovation; and only excuses the King as having "in some sort a right to speak French, he being King of France."* There are some lines in Andrew Marvel's Works, in allusion to this fashion, so beautiful and so

both in France, England, and Scotland, if we may judge by the paintings on the manuscripts of that period, and by the allusions by contemporary writers. The puritans, and particularly the reformers in Scotland, had too much zeal to be reasonable; and among the numerous writings of the latter which remain, we find invectives against these long trains so virulent and so gross, as is not easily to be conceived.—Ed.]

* Preface to the Essay in Evelyn's Works, entitled "Tyrannus, or the Mode."

little known, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting them:—

> "Cælia, whose English doth more richly flow
> Than Tagus—purer than dissolved snow,
> And sweet as are her lips that speak it, she
> Now learns the tongues of France and Italy:
> But she is Cælia still; no other grace
> But her own smiles commend that lovely face!
> Her native beauty's not Italianated,
> Nor her chaste mind into the French translated:
> Her thoughts are English, though her speaking wit
> With other language doth them fitly fit."

Here compliment and reproof are exquisitely blended: but Dryden, in the comedy of *Marriage à-la-Mode*, has rallied the same fashion with more severity, and infinite comic humour. Melantha, the fine lady of the piece, most industriously interlards her discourse with French phraseology. "No one can be so curious of a new fashion, as she is of a new French word: she is the very mint of the nation; and, as fast as any bullion comes out of France, coins it immediately into our language."* Her waiting-maid, who is the "heir of her cast words as well as of her old clothes," and supplies her toilet every morning with a list of new French words for her daily conversation, betrays her vocabulary to her lover, who is thus enabled to attack her with her own weapons,

* Marriage à-la-Mode, Act i., Scene 1. In a subsequent scene, Melantha thus expresses her admiration of a French, and her contempt for an English beau:—How charming is the French air! and what an *étourdi bête* is one of our untravelled Islanders! When he would make his court to me, let me die but he is just Æsop's Ass, that would imitate the courtly French in their addresses; but, instead of those, comes pawing upon me, and doing all things so *mal-a-droitly*.—Act ii., Scene 1.

and wins her by out-doing her in affectation, and overpowering her with her own nonsense.* The character of Melantha in this play, or rather the admirable performance of the part by the celebrated actress, Mrs. Montfort, is considered by Cibber as a most lively and just representation of a fantastic fine lady of Charles's time. His sketch is so very amusing, and so à propos to our subject, that it is given in his own words. "Melantha," he says, "is as finished an impertinent as ever fluttered in a drawing-room; and seems to contain the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. Her language, dress, motion, manners, soul, and body are in a continual hurry to be something more than is necessary or commendable. The first ridiculous airs that break from her, are upon a gallant never seen before, who delivers her a letter from her father, recommending him to her good graces as an honourable lover. Here now, one would think, she might naturally show a little of the sex's decent reserve, though never so slightly covered. No, sir, not a tittle of it: modesty is a poor-souled country gentlewoman; she is too much a court lady to be under so vulgar a confusion. She reads the letter, therefore, with a careless dropping lip and erected brow, humming it hastily over, as if she were impatient to outgo her father's commands by making a complete conquest of him at once; and

* In the list of Melantha's modish and new-fangled French words, the reader is surprised to find several which are now so completely naturalized, that the date of their introduction is only thus ascertained; as *figure, conversation, grimace, embarrassed, ridicule, good graces*, &c.

that the letter might not embarrass the attack,—crack! she crumbles it at once into her palm, and pours down on him her whole artillery of airs, eyes, and motion: down to the ground goes her dainty diving body, as if she were sinking under the weight of her own attractions; then she launches into a flood of fine language and compliment, still playing her chest forward in fifty falls and risings, like a swan upon waving water; and, to complete her impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own wit, that she will not give her lover leave to praise it. Silent, assenting bows, and vain endeavours to speak, are all the share of the conversation he is admitted to; which, at last, he is removed from, by her engagement to half a score of visits, which she swims from him to make, with a promise to return in a twinkling."*

This spirited sketch is possibly dashed with some little caricature and exaggeration, but it is evidently from the life: and we are tempted here to pause, and consider the revolutions in taste and manner, and contrast the tawdry affectation, the flaunting airs, the fluttering movements, the laborious volubility,—in a word, the intolerable vulgarity of a fine lady of Charles's court, with the calm, quiet elegance, the refined and unobtrusive simplicity, which distinguish the really well-bred woman of our time. Notwithstanding what De Grammont says of the *politeness* of the English court, the general profligacy of morals was accompanied by a grossness of manners and language, in both sexes, scarcely to

* Cibber's Apology, 99.

be credited in these days. Women of condition scrupled not to swear "good mouth-filling oaths," such as Hotspur recommended to his wife. The licence introduced and endured upon the stage, was not certainly borrowed from the French theatre; but, encouraged by the depraved taste of the King, and supported by the prostituted talents of Dryden, and the wit of Etheridge, Davenant, Killigrew, Wycherly, it spread the contagion far and wide, where the influence and example of the court could not otherwise have extended. Women of reputation and virtue, married and unmarried, frequented the theatre, which was then a favourite and fashionable place of amusement; from which, in summer, they adjourned to the Park or Spring Gardens,—the performances being over about the time they now begin. How any woman, not wholly abandoned, could sit out one of the fashionable comedies of those days, appears incomprehensible: most of them, indeed, paid so much external homage to modesty, as to appear in masks; which, from the facilities they afforded to intrigue, were then a useful appendage to the female costume. To this Pope alludes:—

> "The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
> And not a mask went unimproved away;
> The modest fan was lifted up no more,
> And virgins smiled at what they blushed before."

The fashionable poetry and light literature of the day, consisted chiefly of love-songs, epigrams, epistles, and satires; all tinged, more or less, with the same perverted and licentious spirit. Well might Dryden, in self-humiliation, exclaim,—

"O gracious God! how oft have we
Profaned thy sacred gift of poesy,
Made prostitute and profligate the muse!"

A vicious taste for personal scandal was one of the most marked characteristics of that period. The age deserved the lash of satire; but they who coarsely satirized it, often committed "most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin." There is, however, a wide difference between the spirit and talent of the various satirists then in vogue: some, like Marvel, Denham, and Rochester, mangled their prey like "carcases for hounds;" others, like Dryden and Butler, "carved it as a dish fit for the gods." In those days newspapers were not, as now, the vehicles for fashionable chit-chat and satire. Coffee-houses,* which had lately been established, were the resort of the gallants, the poets and wits of the times; and the usual method of circulating a court lampoon, or any piece of malicious or political wit, was by transcripts handed about in the coffee-houses, till they fell at last into the hands of some obscure printer, who loved his profit better than his ears; and by dashes and stars, (another invention of that time,) contrived at once to fix the scandal and elude the law.

The last successful play of Dryden, the last court lampoon of Dorset, or the last new love-song of Sedley, then comprised the light reading of a fine lady. As yet

* I believe it is scarce necessary to notice, that tea, coffee, and chocolate were all introduced into England in the reign of Charles the Second; the first from Holland, the second from France, and the last from Portugal, by the Queen and her Portuguese attendants.

novels were not: the serious and prolix romances in folio of Calprenede, Scuderi, and Durfey,—Clèlie, and the Grand Cyrus, were the only works of fiction then fashionable; and in their pictures of pastoral purity, and exalted love, and high-wrought tone of impossible heroism and double-refined sentiment, formed so strong a contrast to the prevailing manners and tastes, that one wonders how the gay gallants and court dames of that period could ever have had patience to pore over them: but thus it was.

Charles loved and patronised music;* and the germ of the Italian Opera may be traced to his reign.† Kil-

* But—he neglected Purcell, and rewarded Grabut!

† [The origin of the Opera in England is a subject that has been as yet very imperfectly known. We may, perhaps, consider as its first form the Masques which were so common during the reigns of Elizabeth and the two first Stuarts. However, we are certain that there was an Opera in England under the Commonwealth. Old Anthony Wood, mentioning a piece of Sir William Davenant's which was performed at Rutland House, May 23, 1656, calls it an *Italian* Opera; but with as little reason, apparently, as Dr. Burney had for supposing that the name *Opera* was only applied to these performances by Wood. The piece to which he alludes was probably the one printed the following year (1657) under the title of "The First Dayes Entertainment at Rutland-House by Declamations and Music; after the manner of the Antients;" in the Prologue to which it is said, in apology for the smallness of the stage, ("our cupboard scene,")—

"Think this your passage, and the narrow way
To our Elisian field, the *Opera*."

And again, in one of the 'Declamations,'—"Poetry is the subtle engine by which the wonderful body of the *Opera* must move." The name is here introduced as though it were by no means new. It must be confessed that this 'Entertainment' bears no great resemblance to the Operas of

ligrew, who had resided some time at Venice, brought over a company of Italian singers, who sang in dialogue and recitative, with accompaniments, and excited great admiration at court. A young Italian, named Francesco

the present day; but another piece, by the same author, comes somewhat nearer to our notion of an Opera: it was printed in 1658, with the title "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru. Exprest by instrumentall and vocall Musick, and by Art of Perspective in Scenes, &c. Represented daily at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, at three after noone punctually.'

Wood says, that the Opera went on with tolerable success for some years at Drury Lane. Sir William Davenant afterwards obtained a patent for a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, (we believe in Great Queen-street,) where, soon after the Restoration, he was busy performing his Operas, and particularly this one of the "Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru." In a rare volume of Songs, printed in 1661, with the title "Choyce Poems, by Wits of both Universities," we find "a Ballad against the Opera," whose satire is directed against this identical piece:—

"Now heaven preserve our realm,
And him that sits at th' helm,
I will tell you of a new story,
Of Sir William and his apes,
With full many merry japes,
Much after the rate of John Dorie.

This sight is to be seen
Near the street that's called Queen,
And the people have call'd it the *Opera.*
But the devil take my wife!
If all the dayes of my life
I did ever see such a fopperie."

And so our satirist goes on to tell us, how one of the performers comes forward with a speech to inform his hearers of the subject of the piece, of which he declares, "'Tis two hours of I know not what."

"Neither must I here forget
The musick there, how it was set,
Dise two ayers and half and a Jove;
All the rest was such a gig,
Like the squeaking of a pig,
Or cats when they'r making their love.

Corbetta,* whose performance on the guitar was much admired and patronised by the King, first made that elegant instrument fashionable in England; and it became such a mania, that, either for show or use, it was as indispensable upon a lady's toilet as her rouge and patch-box. A beau of that time was little thought

---

The next thing was the scene,
And that, as it was layne,
But no man knows where, in Peru,
With a story for the nones
Of raw head and bloody-bones,
But the devil a word that was true."

The subject of Davenant's Opera was, indeed, one by no means proper for stage representation. Among other stage directions in the printed edition, we have "Two Spaniards are discovered,—the one turning a spit, whilst the other is basting an Indian prince, which is rosted at an artificiall fire."!! On which the writer of the song says,—

"Oh! greater cruelty yet!
Like a pig upon a spit
Here lies one, there another boyl'd to a jellie."

The Opera ended by a dance of the Indians, who had been delivered from Spanish cruelty by the bravery of the English,—

"But which was strange again,
The Indians that they had slain
Came dancing all in a troop.
But, oh! give me the last!
For as often as he past,
He still tumbled like a dog in a hoop."

English Operas were common enough during the reign of Charles II. Pepys (Jan. 12, 1667,) mentions "Signor Baptista, (Draghi,) who had proposed a play in Italian for the Opera, which Sir T. Killigrew do intend to have up."—Ed.]

* There is a print of him by Gascar with this inscription:—

"Francesco Corbetta
Famosissimo maestro di Chitarra
Qual Orfeo nel suonar ognun il nàrra."

of, who could not write a song on his mistress, and sing it himself to his guitar. Lord Arran, a younger son of the great Duke of Ormond, was the most admired amateur performer at court; and his beautiful sister, Lady Chesterfield, gloried in possessing the finest guitar in England: but it sounded discord in the ears of her jealous lord, according to the story in De Grammont. The following passage in Pepys' Diary is characteristic of the time: he went to pay a visit of business to Lord Sandwich, on board the *Royal James;* "and there spent an hour, my lord playing on the gittarr, which he now commends above all musique in the world." Lord Sandwich was a distinguished and veteran commander, admiral of the fleet, and at this time a grandfather, or old enough to be one.

Painting was neglected in this reign, except as far as it flattered, and was subservient to personal vanity. Accordingly we do not find the name of a single good painter of history; while portrait-painters abounded. Those who were chiefly employed by the court, during the reign of Charles the Second, were Sir Peter Lely, Huysman, Wissing, and Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Sir Peter Lely was a native of Soest, in Westphalia, where his father, a captain of horse, was then in garrison. After studying some time under an obscure painter of the name of Grebber, he came to England in 1641. Though he painted Charles the First, a short time before his downfal,* and Cromwell more than once, it does not

* This remarkable picture is now at Sion-House.

appear that Lely enjoyed much celebrity till after the Restoration. The gay cavaliers and beautiful women of Charles the Second's court were better suited to his taste, and more appropriate subjects for his delicate and graceful pencil than the stiff figures and stern puritanical visages of the Commonwealth. The first Duchess of York, Anne Hyde, though a fine woman, was not remarkable for her personal attractions: she was, however, content to gratify the taste of the King and her husband in this particular; and, in forming her court, after the acknowledgment of her marriage, took pains to surround herself with all that was most brilliant and fascinating in youth and beauty. Miss Jennings,* Miss Temple,† and Miss Hamilton, were among the most conspicuous ornaments of her court. She began the collection now known as the "Beauties of Windsor," by commanding Sir Peter Lely to paint for her the handsomest women of the time, commencing with her own lovely Maids of Honour. The success with which he executed this charming task, raised him at once to reputation and to fortune. Every woman was emulous to have her charms immortalized by his beauty-breathing pencil; and lovers and poets were, for the first time, gratified by beholding their mistresses on Lely's canvas, scarce less enchanting than they existed in their own imaginations.

Lely has been severely criticised as an abandoned mannerist; and, it must be confessed, that the languid

* Afterwards Duchess of Tyrconnel.

† Afterwards Lady Lyttelton.

air, the sleepy elongated eyelids, and loose fluttering draperies of his women, have given a general character to his pictures, which may be detected almost at the first glance. "Lely's nymphs," says Walpole, "are far too wanton and magnificent to be taken for any thing but Maids of Honour." In another place he says, "Sir Peter Lely's women trail fringes and embroidery through meadows and purling streams." This is surely hypercriticism; and, in fact, through the whole of his observations, Walpole seems determined to undervalue Lely in comparison with Kneller. The *clinquant* of which he accuses him, and justly, was equally the characteristic of the latter painter; and, in Lely, is redeemed by a brilliance of colouring, and a thousand graces in style and composition, which Kneller never equalled, except in one or two of his very best productions. Neither, it is true, can be compared to the great classic painters; but some of Lely's heads are exquisite in tone of colour and expression: his airy, graceful, and floating draperies certainly bear no traces of having been trailed through purling streams; and what true judge or real lover of painting, could wish away those charming snatches of woodland landscape, those magical glimpses of sky and masses of foliage, with which he has so beautifully—so poetically relieved his female figures; or choose to substitute for these rich effects of scenery, the straight lines of architecture, or the folds of a curtain? Why may not a lovely woman be represented, without any intolerable violation of taste or probability, in a garden or a bower, as well as in a saloon at Whitehall? or seated beneath a tree, or beside a fountain, as well as before a

piece of red drapery? In other respects, there can be no doubt that the manner of the painter was in a great measure caught from the prevailing manners, fashions, and character of the times in which he lived. He painted what he saw, and if he made his nymphs "wanton and magnificent," we have very good authority for believing in the accuracy of his likenesses. The loose undress in which many of his female portraits are arrayed, or rather disarrayed, came into fashion as modesty went out, and virtue was voted "une impertinence." The soft sleepy eye,—

> "Seeming to shun the rudeness of men's sight,
> And shedding a delicious lunar light,"

appears to have been natural to one or two distinguished beauties of the time, who led the fashion, and carried to an extreme by others, who wished to be in the mode. We are told that the lovely Mrs. Hyde* had, by long practice, subdued her glances to such a languishing tenderness, that her eyes never opened more than those of a Chinese. We may imagine the fair and indolent Middleton, the languishing Miss Boynton, or the insipid Miss Blague, "aux blondes paupières," with these drooping lids and half-shut glances; but it must have cost the imperious Castlemaine, the brilliant Jennings, and the sprightly Hamilton, no small effort to veil their sparkling orbs in compliance with the fashion, and affect an insidious leer or a drowsy languor. With them it must have been an exquisite refinement of coquetterie, a kind of *demi jour*,

* Theodosia Capel, afterwards Lady Clarendon.

giving to the raised lid and full soul-beaming eye an effect like that of unexpected light—dazzling, surprising, overpowering.

Sir Peter Lely painted some history pieces, which have the same merits and defects as his portraits: the defects, however, predominate. He also drew finely in crayons: some exquisite pieces of his, in this style, are still extant. He was knighted by Charles the Second; and, like his predecessor Vandyke, married a beautiful English woman of high family: like him, too, he was remarkable for his graceful and courtier-like manners, for the splendour of his house and equipage, and for keeping a sumptuous table. He spent thirty-nine years in England, and during twenty he was confessedly at the head of his profession. He died suddenly in 1680, while painting that beautiful Duchess of Somerset, whose portrait is in this collection.

Wissing was a Dutch painter, who came over to England after having obtained some celebrity at the French court: he was much patronised during the short time he was here, and painted most of the royal family. The portraits of Lady Ossory and Mrs. Nott, in this collection, are by Wissing: he was especially in fashion among the ladies, for he was sure to catch the best and most advantageous expression of every face. If it happened that one of his lovely models grew pale, and looked fatigued during a long sitting, he would take her by the hand and dance her about the room, to restore bloom to her complexion and spirit to her countenance: it was a

specific which never failed. Wissing died young, at Lord Exeter's seat at Burleigh. He has been celebrated by Prior.

James Huysman, or Houseman, was a native of Antwerp, who came over to England when Lely was in the zenith of his reputation, and had nearly rivalled him: and not without reason. Huysman had studied in the school of Rubens, and formed his taste and style after the model of Vandyke. Some of his pictures which I have seen, have something of the power and freedom of the latter painter, blended with the sweetness and grace of Lely. His beautiful portrait of the Duchess of Richmond, (Miss Stewart,) as a young cavalier, is at Kensington. Whether the fine picture, which hangs over the door in the Beauty Room at Windsor, be the work of Huysman or Vandyke,—whether it represent a Lady Bellasys, or a Lady Byron, are points which will be discussed and settled in their proper place.

Huysman constituted himself the Queen's painter, and made her sit for all his Madonnas and Venuses. He might have chosen a better model, and a more munificent patroness: Catherine had no predilection for the fine arts. Huysman died in 1696: his death left Kneller without a rival.

Sir Godfrey Kneller was by birth a Saxon. His first success in England is connected with a very characteristic anecdote. He came to this country in 1674, without any intention of residing here, having resolved to settle

at Venice, where he had already received great encouragement. Soon after his arrival, he painted the Duke of Monmouth for Secretary Vernon; and the duke was so charmed by the resemblance, that he engaged the King, his father, to sit to the new painter. At this time Charles had promised the Duke of York his portrait by Lely; and disliking the trouble of sitting, he proposed that both the artists should paint him at the same time. Sir Peter was to choose the light and point of view he thought most advantageous; the stranger was to take the likeness as he could: he performed his task with so much expedition, that he had nearly finished his head of the King, when Lely had only just begun his. Charles was pleased: Lely generously owned the abilities of his competitor, and the justice of the resemblance; and this first success induced Kneller to settle finally in England. After the death of Sir Peter Lely, in 1780, he became the court and fashionable painter, and was for nearly fifty years without a competitor; during which time, he painted all the distinguished characters of the age, both English and foreign. William the Third knighted him, George the First made him a baronet, and Leopold created him a knight of the Roman Empire. Ten sovereigns sat to him; but we owe him a far deeper debt of gratitude for the likenesses of Dryden, Pope, Newton, Locke, Addison, Congreve, and Wortley Montague, which his pencil has transmitted to us.

The well-known "Beauties" at Hampton Court, were painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller for William the Third. As paintings, they are decidedly inferior to the Windsor

Beauties; and, with due deference to the virtues of the ladies they represent, are, as subjects, not to be compared in interest and beauty, to their naughty mammas and grandmammas of Charles the Second's time. There is a chalkiness in the flesh, and a general rawness in the tints, which will not bear a comparison with the delicacy of Lely's carnations, and the splendour of colouring in his landscapes and draperies; and they have all a look of studied stiffness and propriety, which, as it is obviously affected, is almost as bad as the voluptuous negligence of Lely's females.*

Kneller's powers as a wit almost equalled his talents as a painter, and his vanity appears to have exceeded both. Pope, who was his personal friend, and who has given him in his verses a surer immortality than the pencil ever conferred, has left us a characteristic anecdote of him: it is thus related in Spence:—"I (it is Pope who speaks) was sitting one day by Sir Godfrey Kneller, whilst he was drawing a picture: he stopped and said, 'I can't do so well as I should do, unless you flatter me a little; pray flatter me, Mr. Pope; you know I love to be flattered!' I was for once willing to try how far his vanity would carry him; and, after considering a picture he had just finished for a good while very attentively, I said to him in French, (for we

[* Seven of the heads in the gallery of Admirals, were done by Kneller, and the portrait of the Kit-cat Club were his. Kneller had an elder brother, who was also distingtished as a painter, and is said to have studied under Bol and Rembrandt. He came to England, and died in 1702. Ed.]

had been talking for some time before in that language,) 'On lit dans les Ecritures Saintes, que le bon Dieu faisait l'homme après son image; mais, je crois, s'il voudrait faire un autre à présent, qu'il le ferait après l'image que voilà.' Sir Godfrey turned round, and said very gravely, 'Vous avez raison, Monsieur Pope; par Dieu, je le crois aussi.'" The gross folly and profaneness of this answer, seem inconsistent with the wit Sir Godfrey really possessed: possibly he was playing off the poet's trick upon himself, and the reply was only ironical; for he seems, from the first part of the story, to have been quite aware of his own foible. His answer to his tailor was in better taste: the man had proposed his son to him as an apprentice, and begged he would make him a painter: "Dost thou think, man," exclaimed Sir Godfrey in a rage, "that *I* can make thy son a painter? No; only God Almighty makes painters!"*

Sir Godfrey Kneller died in 1723, and left £300 to erect a monument to himself in Westminster Abbey, which was executed by Rysbrach. Pope said the epitaph he composed for this monument was the worst thing he ever wrote,† and he was not far mistaken. The thought in the concluding lines,

> "Living, great Nature feared he might outvie
> Her works, and dying, fears herself may die,"

is borrowed from Cardinal Bembo's epitaph on Raphael

* Walpole.

† "I paid Sir Godfrey Kneller a visit but two days before he died, and I think I never saw a scene of such vanity in all my life: he was lying in

in the Pantheon at Rome: but the hyperbole does not sound so ill in Latin, as in plain homely English; and is, besides, most clumsily translated. It may be added, that a compliment which, paid to the divinest of painters, was only a poetical licence, has become burlesque and absurd when applied to one so immeasurably his inferior. One would almost think, that the vanity which Pope had flattered and ridiculed when living, he meant to stigmatize on the tomb, by praise at once so affected and poor in its expression, so exaggerated and misapplied in its meaning.

It will not be out of place here to continue this slight sketch of portrait-painting and portrait-painters, as connected with female beauty and the English court, down to our own time.

Jervas succeeded Sir Godfrey Kneller as court-painter. In spite of the poetical flattery of Pope,* who

his bed, and contemplating the plan he had made for his own monument. He said many gross things in relation to himself, and the memory he should leave behind him; he said he should not like to lie among the *rascals* in Westminster: a memorial there would be sufficient, and desired me to write an epitaph for it. I did so afterwards; and I think it is the worst thing I ever wrote."—*Pope—in Spence.*

* Pope spared not to flatter his friend in prose as well as in verse. In one of his letters to him, he writes, "Every body here has great need of you: many faces have died for want of your pencil; and blooming ladies have withered in expecting your return." In another, he says, "I long to see you a history-painter: you have already done enough for the private; do something for the public," &c. Jervas would have made a rare history-painter!—so much is there in a fashion and a name, it could dazzle even Pope.

embalmed his name in the "lucid amber of his lines," and his immense reputation when living, Jervas is now almost forgotten as a painter. His portraits being without intrinsic merit as paintings, without even the value which just likeness could give them, have long ago been banished into garrets and housekeepers' rooms, or turned with their faces to the wall, or exiled into brokers' shops, to be sold for the value of their frames. Jervas had formed his taste on two of the worst models a painter could select,—Carlo Maratti and Sir Godfrey Kneller: he contrived to exaggerate the faults of both, without possessing any of their merits; and while his success equalled that of the former, his vanity even exceeded the conceit of the latter.*

At this time also lived Dahl, a Swede by birth, who came over to England about the time of the Revolution. He was a portrait-painter of considerable merit, and patronised by William the Third, for whom he painted the Gallery of Admirals at Hampton Court. He appears, however, to have painted few female portraits; the ladies being engrossed by Kneller and Jervas.

The reigns of George the First and Second present not one name of eminence in portrait-painting: the arts had sunk to the lowest possible ebb; and the absurd

* Jervas was supposed to have indulged a presumptuous passion for Lady Bridgewater, the loveliest of the four lovely daughters of the great Marlborough. Hence the frequent introduction of her name into Pope's Epistle to Jervas, and the exquisite character he has drawn of her: he calls her, in one place, "thy Bridgewater."

and ungraceful fashions, which prevailed in dress and manners at this time, are perpetuated in the stiff, homely, insipid portraits of Richardson and Hudson. "Kneller," as Walpole pleasantly observes, "had exaggerated the curls of full-bottomed wigs, and the tiaras of ribands, lace, and hair, till he had struck out a graceful kind of unnatural grandeur." Not so his immediate successors: they, destitute of taste or imagination, have either left us hideous and literal transcripts of the awkward, tight-laced, be-hooped, and be-wigged generation of belles and beaux before them; or, quitting at once all nature, grace, probability, and even possibility, have given us Arcadian shepherdesses, and Heathen goddesses, and soi-disant Greeks and Romans, where wigs, and flounces, and frippery mingle with crooks, sheep, thunderbolts, and Roman draperies. But it is out of the last abasement of hopeless mediocrity, that original genius most frequently rises and soars; where there is nothing to imitate, nothing to rest upon, a reaction takes place: and while Hudson was painting insipid faces, in powdered side-curls and white satin waistcoats, the genius of Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds was preparing a new era in the history of art. Gainsborough is chiefly celebrated as a landscape-painter; yet what truth of character, what vigour of touch, what free, unmannered simplicity of style in some of his portraits!—his Blue Boy at Grosvenor-House, for instance, equal to any thing of Sir Joshua's. But the bland and graceful pencil of the latter was calculated to please more generally, and he was soon without a competitor. If court patronage make the court-painter, Sir Joshua has

little claim to the title: it was impossible to owe less than he did to *royal* favour: but if the presence of high-born loveliness in attendance upon Majesty constitute a court, he whose pencil has immortalized two generations of English beauties, may well be styled the court-painter of England. Among his pupils and successors, Hoppner imitated him, and caught something of his style and feeling: Sir Thomas Lawrence has *not* imitated him, and has inherited his genius and his fame. It is therefore easier to contrast, than to compare them. Thus, the excellencies of Sir Joshua Reynolds are more allied to the Venetian school, those of Sir Thomas Lawrence to the Flemish school. Sir Joshua reminds us more of Giorgione and Titian, Sir Thomas of Vandyke and Lely. Both are graceful; but the grace of Sir Joshua Reynolds is more poetical, that of Sir Thomas Lawrence more *spirituel;* there is more of fancy and feeling in Sir Joshua, more of high bred elegance in Sir Thomas Lawrence. The first is the sweeter colourist, the latter the more vigorous draughtsman. In the portraits of Sir Joshua there is ever a predominance of sentiment; in those of Sir Thomas a predominance of spirit. The pencil of the latter would instinctively illuminate with animation the most pensive face; and the genius of the former would throw a shade of tenderness into the countenance of a virago. Between both, what an enchanting gallery might be formed of the Beauties of George the Third's reign,—the Beauties who have been presented at St. James's during the last half century! Or, to go no further back than those painted by Law-

rence, since he has been confessedly the court-painter of England—if the aërial loveliness of Lady Leicester—the splendid beauty of Mrs. Littleton—the poetical sweetness of Lady Walscourt, with "mind and music breathing from her face,"—the patrician grace of Lady Lansdowne —the pensive elegance of Mrs. Wolfe;—the more brilliant and intellectual graces of Lady Jersey,—Mrs. Hope, with eyes that anticipate a smile, and lips round which the last bon-mot seems to linger still,—the Duchess of Devonshire, the Lady Elizabeth Forster, Miss Thayer, Lady Blessington, Lady Charlotte Campbell, Mrs. Arbuthnot, &c.—if these, and a hundred other fair "stars," who each in their turn have blazed away a season on the walls of the academy, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes," and then set for ever to the public—if these could be taken from their scattered stations over pianos and chimney-pieces, and assembled together for one spring in the British Gallery, an exhibition more interesting, more attractive, more dazzlingly beautiful can scarcely be imagined: but if the pride of some, and the modesty of others, would militate against such an arrangement, we know nothing that could prevent the Directors of the British Institution from gratifying the public with a regular and chronological series of British historical portraits; beginning with the age of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, as illustrated by Hans Holbein, Antonio More, Oliver, &c., and bringing them down to the conclusion of the last century. The royal palaces, Knowle, Burleigh, Blenheim, Dunham, Hinchingbroke, Tabley, Castle-Howard, &c. contain treasures in this

department, which the noble proprietors would proudly contribute: and such a collection or selection of "gorgeous dames and statesmen old," would not only comprise many curiosities and chefs-d'œuvre of art, but form a most interesting and instructive commentary on the biography and history of our country.

The only substitute for such an exhibition is a Gallery of Engraved Portraits. This brings us back at last to the peculiar subject of this work, "THE BEAUTIES OF CHARLES'S DAYS," and the Queen leads the way, by right of etiquette and courtesy, if not by "right divine" of Beauty.

QUEEN CATHERINE

OF BRAGANZA.

QUEEN KATHERINE.—Bring me a constant woman to her husband;
One that ne'er dream'd a joy beyond his pleasure;
And to that woman, when she has done most,
Yet will I add an honour,—a great patience.

KING HENRY. Go thy ways, Kate.
That man i' the world, who shall report he has
A better wife, let him in nought be trusted,
For speaking false in that.

CATHERINE OF BRAGANZA was the only daughter of that celebrated Duke of Braganza, who, by one of the most bloodless and most patriotic revolutions ever recorded, was placed upon the throne of Portugal in 1641, with the title of Don Juan the Fourth. Her mother, Louisa de Guzman, a daughter of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, was a woman of great beauty and spirit. On the death of her husband in 1656, she was left Regent of the kingdom; and, during the minority of her weak and worthless son, she maintained the national independence against Spain with equal ability and success.

Catherine, the eldest of her children, was born just before the Duke of Braganza's elevation to the throne.

She was brought up, according to the custom of her age and country, within the strict bounds of a convent: her society confined to her confessor, and a few simple-minded, fanatic nuns; her reading, to her Breviary and the Lives of the Saints. Such was the society and such the education from which she was called at the age of three and twenty to share the throne of England, and rule the most licentious court in Europe: a court in which her ignorance and innocence rendered her ridiculous, her religious bigotry contemptible, and her high spirit and fresh and unworn affections only made her feel more acutely the mortifications to which she was hourly exposed, both as a queen and as a woman.

The first overtures for the marriage of Charles with the Infanta of Portugal were made by the Portuguese ambassador, Don Francisco de Melo, in 1661, through the medium of the Earl of Manchester, then Lord Chamberlain. It was at first privately represented to the King, that "it was time for his majesty to think of marriage, from which he had hitherto been withheld by the extreme difficulty of finding, among the issue of the royal houses of Europe, a consort in all respects suited to him:* that there was in Portugal a princess, whose youth, beauty, and large portion, rendered her a desir-

* The King, guided by his mother, had early resolved not to marry a Protestant. When the matter was debated by the privy council, and some of his best friends strongly advised him to unite himself with a Protestant princess, he asked petulantly where there was a Protestant for him to marry? Several of the German princesses were mentioned. "Odds-fish!" says the King impatiently, "they are all foggy; I cannot like any one of them for a wife!"—*Carte's Life of Ormond.*

able match for the King of England: she was, indeed, a Catholic, and would never forsake the religion in which she had been bred up; but she was without any meddling activity of mind, and had been educated by her mother, the Queen Regent, in total ignorance of politics and business; and being of a gentle and submissive disposition, would be satisfied with the undisturbed exercise of her own religion, without concerning herself with that of others."

Finding these representations graciously received, the ambassador proceeded, still with the utmost secrecy, to explain the offer he was authorized to make. Portugal was to pay down in ready money five hundred thousand pounds sterling, as the marriage portion of the Infanta; and to assign over to the crown of England the fortress of Tangier, on the African coast, and the island of Bombay in the East Indies, with full liberty to the English of trading to the Brazils. To the profuse and needy Charles, the offer of half a million of money, placed at his sole disposal, was a tempting consideration: the religion of the Infanta was no objection to *him*, and he hoped that the advantageous conditions annexed to the treaty would render it palatable to his people.

When it was laid before the council, Clarendon, whose influence was then at its height, eagerly supported the measure; partly from a conviction of its political utility, partly to prevent the suspicion that he had been privy to the marriage of his daughter* with the Duke of

* Anne Hyde.

York, in the hope of her offspring succeeding to the crown: perhaps, also, he thought to make the young Queen his friend, in opposition to the mistresses and profligate courtiers, whom his natural timidity of disposition made him fear, but whom the inborn integrity of his character would not allow him to court. Supported by his credit, and the evident wishes of the King, the treaty met with no opposition from the council. The Portuguese ambassador returned to his country to make known the favourable sentiments of the King, and to bring back full powers for the ratification of the treaty: he carried with him also a letter from Charles to the Infanta, written with his majesty's own hand, in which he addressed her as his wife.

Even when matters had gone thus far, and the King's honour was in some degree pledged, the treaty was nearly broken off by the intrigues of the Earl of Bristol, who was devoted to the Spanish interest, then in direct opposition to that of Portugal. Bristol,* the most crack-brained of political profligates, whose inconsistency made him a by-word and a mockery, had rendered himself pleasing to the King by his convivial qualities, which were unrestrained by principle or decency, and obtained a strong influence over him by being privy to some important state secrets.† He now employed all that influence to break off the intended marriage, and

* George Digby. See more of him in the Memoir of Lady Sunderland.

† It is said, that he was one of the witnesses to the King's formal abjuration of the Protestant religion.

was zealously supported by the ambassador of Spain, (Don Louis de Haro,) a man of high passions, and more than Spanish pride. Portugal, they insisted, was then in such a state of poverty, that all her finances were inadequate to pay the promised portion: Spain was collecting all her power to crush the family of Braganza; who, unable to cope with the immense expedition arrayed against them, would have no other resource than "that of transporting themselves and all their adherents to Brazil:" * and the ambassador added, with characteristic audacity, that "really he had too high an opinion of his majesty's good sense to believe that he would incur the resentment of Spain, by allying himself with a family and a nation of rebels."

The Earl of Bristol, who knew the King's ruling foible, drew a most odious picture of the Infanta's person, and asserted her incapacity of becoming a mother: he then reverted to the charms and accomplishments of the Italian women. His majesty, he said, had only to take his choice among the princesses of Italy; and the King of Spain would adopt her, and dower her as a daughter of Spain.

These artful suggestions had their effect upon the versatile and susceptible mind of Charles. He began to cool upon his intended marriage; and, at length, to view it even with a degree of disgust. When the Portuguese ambassador returned from Lisbon, the changes

* It is a curious coincidence, that the expedient here anticipated should have been actually resorted to within our own memory.

which had taken place during his short absence, and his cold reception at court, so astonished and affected him, that being "something of a hypochondriac," he took to his bed, and felt or feigned sickness.*

But, just at this crisis, fortunately (or should we not rather say, *unfortunately?*) for Catherine, the levity of Bristol, and the unexampled audacity of the Spanish ambassador, defeated the effect of all their past intrigues. The latter behaved with such rash insolence, that the King, with a spirit he seldom asserted on such occasions, commanded him to depart the kingdom instantly, without seeing his face again; and sent the Secretary of State to inform him "that a complaint of his conduct would be made to the King, his master, from whom his majesty would expect that justice should be done upon him The ambassador, full of alarm and resentment, withdrew from court, and quitted the country in a few days. The Chancellor, and others of the council, seized this moment to represent to Charles, that his honour was too far pledged to retreat. A private intimation was delivered from the French government, through the envoy Bastide, that the King could not bestow himself better in marriage than with the Infanta of Portugal, who was styled, in courtly phrase, "a lady of great beauty and admirable endowments;" offering assistance in money in case of a rupture with Spain. The King's wavering resolution was at length fixed by a sight of a miniature of the Infanta, which the Portuguese ambassador had brought with

* Clarendon's Life.

him. It represented a young person, not indeed strikingly or regularly beautiful, but whose delicate features, soft expression, clear olive complexion, and fine dark eyes, were at least attractive. The King, gazing on it with complacency, declared "*that* person could not be unhandsome," and, with little more deliberation, the famous treaty was concluded which has bound England and Portugal in strict alliance ever since.

The Earl of Sandwich was immediately despatched with a fleet to take possession of Tangier, and bring home the new Queen.* Her embarkation and arrival in England were attended by some curious circumstances,

* [The circumstance of a person of so good reputation as the Earl of Sandwich having been employed on this service, might almost have been looked on as a favourable omen for the new Queen, and as a pledge that her cause, had she herself possessed the spirit to support it, would have been that of the better party, though not always the stronger party, in the state. The character of this nobleman, as left us by his contemporaries, shines much above the generality of the courtiers of the reign of Charles II. Clarendon says of him, "that he was a gentleman of so excellent a temper, that he could make himself no enemies; of so many good qualities, and so easy to live with, that he marvellously reconciled the minds of all men to him, who had not intimacy enough with him to admire his other parts; yet was, in the general inclination of men, upon some disadvantage. They who had as constantly followed the king, whilst he as constantly adhered to Cromwell, and knew not how early he entertained repentance, and with what hazards and dangers he had manifested it, did believe the King had been too prodigal in heaping honours upon him. And they who had been familiar with him, and of the same party, and thought they had been as active as he in contributing to the revolution, considered him with some anger, as one who had better luck than they without more merit, and who had made early conditions: when, in truth, no man in the kingdom had been less guilty of that address; nor did he ever contribute to any advancement to which he arrived by the least intimation

which influenced her future life. The portion of £500,000 which the Queen-mother had with difficulty provided, by selling her jewels and much of her plate, and borrowing the jewels and plate of several churches and monasteries, had been employed on some sudden emergency in fitting out forces against Spain, and was not forthcoming. The Queen-mother made the best apology she could for a step to which she had been driven by the cruel necessity of her situation: she proposed to put on board the fleet the amount of one-half of the portion in jewels, sugar, cotton, silk, and other commodities, and pledged herself to the payment of the other half within a year. Lord Sandwich was much embarrassed; but found it necessary to acquiesce, having no

or insinuation that he wished it, or that it would be acceptable to him. Yet, upon this blast, the winds rose from all quarters; reproaches of all sorts were cast upon him, and all affronts contrived for him."—*Continuation of the Life of the Earl of Clarendon*, p. 303. He fell in the famous engagement with the Dutch off Southwold Bay, 28th May, 1672, and it was observed of him, that he was always on the victorious side in the many actions in which he had been engaged, even in this in which he died. "So that," says the elegant historian of the British Peerage, "we may say of this noble earl, that as he was the chief cause of the defeat given to the Hollanders, in the first fight of the second war, so he was a principal occasion of preventing the ruin of the English and French in this remarkable engagement, which was the first of the third war. Gerard Brandt acknowledges, in his Life of De Ruyter, that the squadron of Van Ghrut entering into the action, several men of war fell upon the earl; that however he contrived to maintain himself, and give the last proofs of an unfortunate valour till noon, when a fire-ship took hold of his ship. "Such," says Brandt, "was the end of this earl, who was vice-admiral of England, valiant, intelligent, prudent, civil, obliging in his words and deeds, who had performed great services to his king, not only in war, but also in affairs of state, and in his embassies."—Ed.]

instructions provided against such a dilemma: and the King, who expected the arrival of half a million in gold, with at least as much impatience as that of his bride, was equally enraged and disappointed at the non-payment. Even Catherine herself was made to feel the effects of his ill-humour on this occasion.

The other circumstance above alluded to, was more important in its effects. Though Catherine assumed state in Portugal, and held a court as Queen of England, she was suffered to embark without the performance of any of the rites of marriage, or any of the ceremonies usual among crowned heads on such occasions. The cause of this extraordinary, and even unparalleled proceeding was this:—The power of Spain at the court of Rome was so predominant, that the title of the Braganza family to the throne of Portugal had never yet been acknowledged there. Without a dispensation from the Pope, the Infanta could not be married to a heretic in her own country, and the papal dispensation, if granted at all, would have styled her simply the daughter and sister to a Duke of Braganza. Rather than submit to this apprehended insult, her proud and jealous relatives chose to trust unreservedly in the honour of England.* The fleet, with the princess and her retinue, sailed from Lisbon the 13th of April, and arrived at Portsmouth the 14th of May. But, though suffering severely from the effects of her voyage, Catherine remained on board till the 20th,

* Secret History, vol. i. In the Stuart Papers it is said, that Catherine "would not be married by a Protestant proxy." Was she then in the secret that her husband was a Catholic?

from a point of etiquette which did not allow her to land, or be seen by any but her women, till met by the King, who was detained in London. Immediately on his arrival, the marriage ceremony was performed according to the Romish rite, by the Lord Aubigny,* almoner to the Queen, in the presence of the Portuguese ambassador, and two or three of her women. They were afterwards married according to the Protestant church, by Dr. Sheldon, bishop of London: but, on this occasion, Catherine, as simple-minded as bigoted, refused to repeat the words of the ritual, turned away her head poutingly, and would not even look the bishop in the face. She insisted, however, on his solemnly pronouncing her the *wife* of the King before he quitted her chamber.†

This hasty and imperfect marriage was subsequently the occasion of much scandal, and tended to embitter the after-life of Catherine. Many affected to regard it as a mere contract, not binding upon the King; and even to found on it additional reasons for the divorce, which, in

* Brother to the Duke of Richmond.

† [The Earl of Sandwich gave the following account of the manner of the Protestant marriage:—"May 21, 1662, in the afternoon the King and Queen came into the presence-chamber (at Portsmouth) upon the throne, and the contract formerly made with the Portuguese ambassador was read in English by Sir John Nicholas, in Portuguese by the Portuguese secretary De Saire; after which, the King took the Queen by the hand, and *(as I think)* said the words of matrimony appointed in the Common-Prayer, the Queen also declaring her consent. Then the bishop of London (Sheldon) stood forth, and made the declaration of matrimony in the Common-Prayer, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."—*Kraket's Chronicle.* See Harris's Life of Charles the Second, 2 vols. 8vo., 1757.—Ed.]

1669, was seriously agitated; and would probably have been carried into effect upon slighter grounds, if Charles had resembled his bluff ancestor Harry the Eighth.

It does not appear that the King was disappointed in the person of his young Queen;* in a letter to Lord Clarendon, dated from Portsmouth, he expresses his satisfaction in strong terms;† and Clarendon says, "it is certain she had wit and beauty enough to have pleased the King, if bigotry and an ill education had not spoiled her." Pepys, describing her in his Diary, says, "For the Queen, though she be not a very charming, yet hath she a good, modest, and innocent look, which is most pleasing." Catherine's defects seem to have been those of manner, rather than person; her disposition was not sprightly, nor her deportment dignified. It would be

* "The Queen is brought a few days since to Hampton Court, and all people do say of her to be a very fine and handsome lady, and very discreet, and that the King is pleased enough with her, which, I fear, will put Madam Castlemaine's nose out of joynt."—*Pepys' Diary.*

"Portsmouth, 21 May, 8 in the Morning.

† "I arrived here yesterday, about two in the afternoon; and as soon as I had shifted myself, I went to my wife's chamber. * * * * * Her face is not so exact as to be called a beauty, though her eyes are excellent good, and not any thing in her face that in the least degree can shock one. On the contrary, she has as much agreeableness in her looks, altogether, as ever I saw; and if I have any skill in physiognomy, which I think I have, she must be as good a woman as ever was born. Her conversation, as much as I can perceive, is very good; for she has wit enough, and a most agreeable voice. You would much wonder to see how well we are acquainted already. In a word, I think myself very happy; but I am confident our two humours will agree very well together. I have not time to say any more. My Lord-Lieutenant will give you an account of the rest."

unjust to attribute the moody pettihness and melancholy, which she betrayed soon after her marriage, to a natural gloominess of disposition; for it only proved, that she was not absolutely insensible. Charles, whose powers of captivation few women could withstand, had, in the commencement of their intercourse, won her whole affections; and she could not see herself neglected by her husband, and brow-beat by insolent rivals, without the discontent and anger natural to a fond, jealous, and high-spirited woman.

When Catherine first arrived in England, she was dressed after the antiquated fashion of Portugal, in a high boddice, ruff, and farthingale, which excited some insolent merriment in her new court, and which the King *obliged* her to alter.* She had brought with her from Lisbon a bevy of Portuguese attendants, of whom De Grammont has left us a ludicrous description. Six "monsters," alias Maids of Honour, ruffed and farthingaled like their mistress, surrounded her person: they were governed by an old duenna, (or *guarda damas*,)

* There is a fine print of the Queen in her Portuguese costume by Faithorne; in which her hair is dressed out like a full-bottomed wig. Catherine was very reluctant to change her style of dress: her Portuguese attendants had endeavoured to persuade her that she should neither learn the English language, nor use their habit; which they told her would be for the dignity of Portugal, and would quickly induce the English ladies to conform to her majesty's practice. The result, however, was just the reverse. Evelyn speaks of the excessive ugliness and "monstrous fardingals" of the Portuguese women: and Pepys (who was very sensitive to personal appearance) seems to have been horrified both by their hideous persons and dresses.

more hideous than all her damsels, as stiff as pride and buckram could make her, with, we may suppose, double solemnity of ruff, and treble expansion of farthingale. Besides these, Catherine had in her retinue six almoners, a confessor, a Jewish perfumer, and an officer, whose function seems to have puzzled the whole court, entitled the "Queen's barber." These foreigners, by their ignorance, bigotry, and officiousness, caused as much confusion as the French attendants of her predecessor, Henrietta Maria; and Charles soon followed the example of his father, by shipping the whole cargo back to their own country, and surrounded the Queen with creatures of his own.* In the list of her new attendants laid before Catherine for her approbation, Charles had the effrontery to include Lady Castlemaine, his acknowledged mistress. Catherine instantly drew her pen across the name, and when the King insisted, she replied haughtily "that she would return to her own country, rather than be forced to submit to such an indignity." Her spirit however availed her little: Charles, spurred on by the female fury who governed him, was steady to his cruel purpose. On one particular occasion, when the Queen held what we should now call a Drawing-room, at Hampton Court, Lady Castlemaine was introduced in form by the King. Catherine, who did not know her, and heard the name imperfectly, received her with as much grace and benignity as the rest:—but in the next moment, recollect-

* The Countess of Penalva, "by reason of the Queen's tender attachment to her, and her own infirmities, was suffered to remain on the Queen's earnest entreaty, that she might not be left wholly in the hands of strangers."—See Clarendon.

ing herself, and aware of the public insult which had been offered to her, all her passions were roused: she started from her chair, turned as pale as ashes; then red with shame and anger; the blood gushed from her nose, and she swooned in the arms of her women. The court was immediately broken up: but Charles, though probably touched with some compunction, had been persuaded by some of the profligates about his person, that the Queen wished to govern him; that his dignity and authority would be compromised if he gave up the point; and fancied he was imitating his model, Louis Quatorze, by forcing his Queen to acquiesce in her own dishonour. Lord Clarendon, during this degrading contest between the wife and the mistress, had vainly opposed the King's intention; and at length, in disgust, absented himself from court: upon which the King wrote to him a letter, of which the following is an extract:—

"I wish I may be unhappy in this world, and in the world to come, if I fail in the least degree of what I have resolved, which is of making my Lady Castlemaine of my wife's bed-chamber; and whosoever I find use any endeavours to hinder this resolution of mine, except it be only to myself, I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life. You know how true a friend I have been to you. If you will oblige me eternally, make this business as easy to me as you can, what opinion soever you are of; for I am resolved to go through this matter, let what will come on it, which again I swear before Almighty God: therefore, if you desire to have the continuance of my friendship, meddle no more with this

business, except it be to beat down all false and scandalous reports, and to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in; and whosoever I find to be my Lady Castlemaine's enemy in the matter, I do promise upon my word to be his enemy as long as I live."

Whatever may be thought of the style and reasoning of this notable epistle, it had its effect. Lord Clarendon labours to excuse the part he took in this wretched business, of which he has given us a very particular account: but it must be allowed, that it ill became the gravity of his place and character to stoop to be the King's instrument on such an occasion. He allows that, after having represented to Charles "the hard-heartedness and cruelty of laying such a command upon the Queen, which flesh and blood could not comply with;" and reminded him of the difference, in this respect, between the French and the English courts; "that in the former such connexions were not new and scandalous, whereas in England they were so unheard of, and so odious, that the mistress of the King was infamous to all women of honour;"* he yet undertook to persuade the Queen to bear this indignity, which was "more than flesh and blood could comply with," and to receive into her society—nay, into an office of honour and trust about her person, a female held "infamous by all women of honour," and whom he never would suffer his own wife to visit.

* Charles the First and James the First were models of conjugal fidelity; and Henry the Eighth never thought of any other resource in his amours, but the desperate one of divorcing, or cutting off the head of one Queen to marry another.

When the Chancellor first addressed himself to the Queen upon this delicate subject, she broke out into such a passion of grief and indignation, that he was obliged to quit her. The next day she asked his pardon for "giving vent to the passion that was ready to break her heart;" and desired his advice, and to hear the truth with all freedom. He began by excusing the King: he told her "he doubted she was little beholden to her education, that had given her no better information of the follies and iniquities of mankind, of which he presumed the climate whence she came could have given her more instances than this cold region would afford, *(though at that time it was indeed very hot)*: and if her majesty had been fairly dealt with in that particular, she could never have thought herself so miserable, and her condition so insupportable, as she seemed to think; the ground of which heavy complaint he could not comprehend." The poor Queen, with many blushes and tears, acknowledged that "she did not think she should have found the King's affections engaged to another lady;" and then she stopped abruptly, unable from the excess of her emotion to say more. The Chancellor continued the conference with true diplomatic art; paid her some compliments, and assured her, that if she made use of her own powers of charming, she need fear no rivals. He ventured to ask her, "whether, if it should please God to give a Queen to Portugal, she would find that court so full of chaste affections?" and this allusion to the notorious gallantry of her brother Alphonso, made the Queen smile. But, when he touched upon the hated point of contention, and named Lady Castlemaine, it

called forth all the rage and fury of yesterday, with "fewer tears and more fire;" and she declared, with passionate vehemence, that rather than submit, she would embark for Lisbon in "any little vessel."

"That night," adds Lord Clarendon, "the fire flamed higher than ever. The King reproached the Queen with stubbornness and want of duty; she him with tyranny and want of affection." The next day, they neither spoke nor looked at each other. The Queen sat "melancholick in her chamber, all in tears." The King sought his diversions elsewhere; never, however, sleeping out of his own apartment. After a few days, the Chancellor again waited on the Queen by the King's command; but with no better success than is usual with those who interfere in matrimonial squabbles. After exhausting all his arts of diplomacy, and employing such arguments as would have come better from any other lips than those of "my grave Lord Keeper," he could not, though the Queen listened to him with edifying patience, draw from her any other reply than "that the King might do as he pleased, but that she never would consent to it." The Lord Chancellor at length withdrew himself from a contest, in which he had cut such a sorry figure, making it his humble suit to the King, that he might no more be consulted nor employed in an affair, in which he had been so unsuccessful: at the same time, advising him strongly to desist from an intention at once cruel and unjust.

But Charles had not studied women to so little

purpose: he knew there is one method of crushing down a female heart that never fails: and better than the Chancellor he knew, that possessing his wife's unbounded affection while he cared not for her, he had the game in his own hands: and well he understood how to play it effectually. He no longer insisted, or met violence with violence; but he treated Catherine with a cold and scornful neglect, assuming to others a more than usual gaiety and complacency of manner. She was left out in all the mirth and parties of pleasure going forward. Charles studiously proved to her that his happiness in no respect depended on her, nor on her acquiescence in his wishes. The courtiers, having their cue from their master, forsook her to crowd round Lady Castlemaine; and she was reduced to a mere cypher in her own court. It was too much to bear: Catherine had strong passions, but no real strength and magnanimity of character: after a short struggle, in which her pride, her spirits, her heart, were broken down and subdued by continued mortifications, she yielded, — and gained nothing by the concession, but the contempt and mistrust of those who had hitherto pitied her ill usage, honoured her firmness, and confided in her principles.* Even the King, who had affected throughout more displeasure than he really felt, and could not but respect the cause from which her opposition sprung, now contemned her for her weak submission, and imputed her former resistance to pride and petulance, rather than to affection and female dignity.

* Clarendon's Life, folio, pp. 169, 180.

In the month of August following her marriage, Catherine was induced to receive Lady Castlemaine as one of the ladies of her bed-chamber, and to allow her all the honours and privileges attending that office.* It happened, on one occasion, that Lady Castlemaine came into the Queen's closet, while she was under the hands of her dresser: "I wonder," said she, insolently, "your majesty can have the patience to sit so long a dressing!" "I have so much reason to use patience," replied the Queen, pointedly, "that I can very well bear it!" This was the retort courteous, such as became a Queen: but Lady Castlemaine was not one to be easily abashed by a repartee.

From this time we do not hear of any open misunderstanding between the King and Queen. Charles, who was good-humoured and polite, treated his wife with an easy complaisance, which, without satisfying her tenderness, left her nothing to complain of. She even assumed a gaiety of manner which she thought would be agreeable to the King, and encouraged the festivities, the masques, and banquets in which she knew he delighted: but this struggle to subdue herself, the continued indifference of her husband, the presence of more than one insolent favourite, who braved her in her own court,—above all, her excessive anxiety to have children, which was increased by the prevalent belief that she was incapable of producing heirs to the crown, seem to have

* "They went away—the King and his Queen, and my Lady Castlemaine and young Crofts (the Duke of Monmouth) *in one coach*, and the rest in other coaches."—*Pepys' Diary.*

preyed upon her mind, and, at length, threw her into a dangerous fever, in which she was twice given over by the court physicians.* In her delirium she raved in the most affecting manner of *her children*, fancying she had three; "but was troubled lest her boy should be but an ugly boy: upon which the King, who was present, in order to soothe her, said, 'No, he was a very pretty boy.'—'Nay,' replied the poor Queen, distractedly, 'if he be like you, he is a very pretty boy indeed, and I would be very well pleased with it.'"† In one of her lucid intervals she expressed a thankful sense of the King's affectionate attentions, which, indeed, ceased not during her illness; and told him that the sight of his affliction would have made her regret life, but for the conviction that she had never possessed his love; and that in dying, she should make room for a successor more worthy of him, and to whom Heaven would perhaps grant the blessing denied to her: and taking his hand while she spoke, she bathed it with tears. The King, who was naturally soft-tempered, was utterly subdued; he wept and entreated her to live for his sake. His endearing expressions had more effect than all the prescriptions and cordials of Dr. Prujeon, and it was believed at that time were the real cause of her recovery: at all events, her disorder from that moment took a favourable turn, and she was shortly afterwards pronounced out of dan-

* In October, 1663.

† *Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., 255, 256.—"This morning, about five o'clock, the physician feeling the Queen's pulse, thinking to be better able to judge, she being still and asleep, waked her; and the first word she said was, "How are the children?"—Poor Queen!

ger. An incident so romantic, and so well known, was not likely to be passed over in silence by the poets of those days. Waller, the prince of courtly rhymsters, has made the best use of it, in his Address to the Queen on her Birth-day, soon after her recovery: it is not the happiest of his occasional pieces, but the concluding lines are not without elegance:

> "He that was never known to mourn
> So many kingdoms from him torn,
> His tears reserved for you, more dear,
> More prized, than all those kingdoms were;
> For when no healing art avail'd,
> When cordials and elixirs fail'd,
> On your pale cheek he dropp'd the shower,
> Revived you like a dying flower."

There are some other trifling pieces among Waller's Miscellanies, in which Catherine is flattered with much courtly *savoir faire*. The little poem of "Tea commended by her Majesty," is one of the best. There is also an epigram, not very pointed or significant, "Upon a Card which her Majesty tore at Ombre,"—whether in petulance or playfulness, we are not told.

The remainder of Catherine's life affords little to interest. She not only never interfered in politics, but did not even attempt to serve or countenance those who were inclined to be her friends; and who, by rallying round her, might have formed a counterpoise to the party of Lady Castlemaine. Lord Sandwich, who brought her over from Portugal, and at first attached himself to her, gave as a reason for his dereliction, that he did not choose "to fall for her sake, whose wit, management, or

interest, was not likely to hold up any man." It was, indeed, sufficient for her to distinguish any of the courtiers in particular, to mark them at once as objects of the King's displeasure. Thus, young Edward Montagu, the son of Lord Manchester, was disgraced and turned out of the court, for no other fault than the pride he took in the Queen's favour. Not that Charles either valued her affections or doubted her discretion; but merely from a love of contradiction, a petty jealousy of power, or a fear of the raillery of such profligates as Rochester, Buckingham, and Killigrew, his "all-licensed jester." But Catherine allowed him few opportunities of thus mortifying her.

After having suffered in the first years of her marriage from every passion that could distract a female mind, she appears to have been at length wearied into perfect indifference; and not only endured her husband's licentious conduct with equanimity,* but even took pains to reconcile him, on some notable occasions, with his perverse and capricious mistresses. She endeavoured to please the King, by encouraging every species of dissipation and gaiety; and even entered into the extravagant masquerading frolics, then so fashionable, with more spirit than success.† "Once," says Burnet, "the Queen's

* "Mr. Pierce told me, that the good Queene will, of herself, stop before she goes sometimes into her dressing-room, till she knows whether the King be there, for fear he should be, as she hath sometimes taken him, with Miss Stewart."—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 277.

† "In the hall, to-day, Dr. Pierce (one of the court physicians) tells me that the Queene begins to be briske and play like other ladies, and is

chairman, not knowing who she was, went from her; so she was alone, and much disturbed, and came to Whitehall in a hackney-coach, some say in a cart."

Another of Catherine's masquerading whims is recorded in Ives's Select Papers. There being a fair at Audley-End, where the court then was, the Queen, the Duchess of Richmond, (Miss Stewart,) and the Duchess of Buckingham, disguised themselves as country lasses, in red petticoats, &c. &c., and so went to see the fair; Sir Bernard Gascoigne riding before the Queen on a sorry cart-horse. But they had so caricatured their disguises that they "looked more like antiques than country-folk," and the country people began to gather round them:—"The Queen going into a booth to buy a pair of garters for her sweete harte, and Sir Bernard asking for a pair of gloves stitched with blue for his sweete harte, they were betrayed by their gebrish and their exaggerated rusticity; and the Queen being recognised, the whole fair flocked about them. They at length got to their horses; but as many of the fair as had horses got up with their wives, children, neighbours, and sweete hartes behind them, to get as much gape as they could, 'till they brought them to the court-gate. Thus, by ill conduct, was a merrie frolic turned into a penance."

It should be observed, that nothing worse than a frolic was ever imputed to Queen Catherine, even by the scandalous court in which she lived. Buckingham, who

quite another woman from what she was. It may be, it may make the King like her better," &c.—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 225.

offered to carry her off to the Plantations, out of the King's way, to give colour to a divorce and make room for Miss Stewart, would not have spared her fair fame, had it not been unimpeachable. The King rejected this idea with horror, saying, "it was a wicked thing to make a poor lady miserable, only because she was his wife and had no children, which was not her fault." In that age, when satire was "worn to rags and scribbled out of fashion," she did not wholly escape the "fangs of malice;" but the most coarse and violent lampoons of which she was the subject, could not attack her on any other score than her popish education, and her inordinate passion for dancing.*

* It seems incredible how a woman, who did not aspire beyond the passive, insignificant, inoffensive part Catherine was content to play in her own court, could ever have provoked the grossness and bitterness of invective which appears in some of these productions. One entitled "The Queen's Ball," which was several times reprinted, and widely circulated, begins thus:—

"Reform, great Queen! the errors of your youth,
And hear a thing you never heard, called Truth!
Poor *private* balls content the Fairy Queen;
You must dance (and dance damnably) to be seen,
Ill-natured little goblin! and designed
For nothing but to dance and vex mankind!
What wiser thing could our great monarch do,
Than root ambition out by showing you?
You can the most aspiring thoughts pull down;
For who would have his wife to have his crown?"

The next lines seem to refer to some particular trick, or habit, which Catherine had of holding jewels in her mouth:—

"See in her mouth a sparkling diamond shine;—
The first good thing that e'er came from that mine.
Heaven some great curse upon that hand dispense,
That for the increase of nonsense takes it thence."

When the question of a divorce was afterwards more seriously debated, and even some preliminary steps taken in the House of Lords,* and Dr. Burnet employed to write in favour of it; the King then said publicly, "that if his conscience would allow him to divorce the Queen, it would suffer him to dispatch her out of the world;"† and Buckingham, and his worthy coadjutor Lord Bristol, found themselves opposed in a quarter where they certainly little expected opposition. Affection for his brother might possibly have influenced Charles in this instance, as well as justice to his Queen.

In the same year, 1668, the elder brother of Catherine, Don Alphonso VI., a contemptible and dissolute monarch, was deposed by his Queen and council, and his brother, Don Pedro, a man of courage and talent, placed upon the throne of Portugal. This revolution in no other respects affected the situation or happiness of the Queen of England, than as it probably furnished an

After a great deal in the same strain, this polite effusion concludes:

"What will be next, unless you please to go
And dance among your fellow-fiends below!
There, as upon the Stygian lake you float,
You may o'erset and sink the laden boat;
While we the funeral rites devoutly pay,
And dance for joy that you are danced away!"

* In the divorce-bill of Lord Roos, afterwards Earl of Rutland, which was passed through the House to serve as a precedent.

[It is curious that the Duke of Buckingham opposed somewhat violently the progress of this bill, and only desisted after concessions had been made to him by Lord Roos. The lady was first cousin to the Duchess of Cleveland.—ED.]

† James II.—*Vide* "Stuart Papers."

additional reason against the meditated divorce. Some attempts were made, on the King's part, to induce her to go into a nunnery of her own free will; but, with all her bigotry, she had no vocation that way.*

In 1679, during the sanguinary farce of the Popish Plot, the wretches Oates and Bedloe accused the Queen of being privy to the pretended conspiracy against her husband's life. Animated by a belief that this would be agreeable to the King, Oates had the boldness, at the bar of the House of Commons, to utter these words in his affected phraseology:—"Aye, Taitus Oates, accause Catherine, Queen of England, of Haigh Traison!" The grounds of his accusation are stated in the trial of Wakeman, the Queen's physician; who, he alleged, was bribed with £15,000 to poison the King, in case he should escape the poniard of a Jesuit named Coniers, and the pistols of Pickering and Groves. Oates then swore, "that three Jesuits carried him with them to Somerset-House, where they were summoned to attend the Queen; that he remained in an anti-chamber, when they were ushered into her presence; that he heard a female voice say, that she would assist Sir George Wakeman in his project, and would no longer bear these repeated violations of her bed. When the fathers came out, he desired to see the Queen; and when admitted into the anti-chamber, whence the female

* "This being St. Catherine's-day, the Queene was at masse by seven o'clock this morning; and Mr. Ashburnham (groom of the bedchamber) do say, that he never saw any one have so much zeale in his life as she hath; and (the question being asked by my Lady Carteret) much beyond the bigotry that ever the old Queene-mother had."—*Pepys.*

voice had proceeded, he saw the Queen, who smiled graciously on him, and there was no other woman present." These impudent stories, with some blunders into which the best-breathed witness may fall, saved Sir George Wakeman's life.*

In the commencement of this affair, the Commons, maddened with rage and terror, sent up a petition to the King to have the Queen removed from Whitehall, and her household arrested, or despatched out of the country; and Charles had now an opportunity of ridding himself legally of a wife he had never loved. Such a measure, though it would have consigned him to the abhorrence of posterity, would at the moment have been in the highest degree popular; but, shocked at the audacity of such a monstrous fabrication, and touched with pity for his defenceless and inoffensive Queen, he crushed the accusation at once, observing to those about him, "They think I have a mind for a new wife; but, for all that, I will not stand by and see an innocent woman abused."

In February 1685, the King was seized with apoplexy, and the Queen hearing of his danger, but that he was still sensible, sent an earnest request to be admitted to his presence, at the same time entreating his forgiveness for any offences she might have ignorantly committed. Charles refused to see her, but sent her a message, couched in the most affectionate terms, assuring her *he* had nothing to forgive, but requesting her pardon for

* See Dryden's Works, (Sir Walter Scott's Ed.) vol. ix., p. 294.

the many wrongs he had done her. At this time the Duchess of Portsmouth was seated by his pillow, and she took care that none should approach whose interests were likely to counteract her own. The King, after lingering a few days, died in her arms—a hypocrite to the last. It is remarkable, that Charles II., with all his popular qualities, so beloved, so regretted by the nation he had sold, cheated, impoverished, misgoverned, and enslaved, possessed not one personal friend; and the disgusting negligence with which his last remains were treated, strengthened the false report that he had been poisoned.* He captivated all who approached him occasionally by his amiable manners; but only those who were at a distance were deceived by his hollow and heartless courtesy. One by one, the faithful adherents of his family withdrew in disgrace or in despair; and he who professedly mocked at the existence of virtue and disinterested attachment, and classed all mankind into knaves and fools, died, as he deserved, without a friend.

On the King's death, Catherine made a very decent display of grief, and received the visits of condolence in a chamber lighted with tapers, and hung with funereal black from the ceiling to the floor.† She after-

* See Burnet.

† Dryden, in his Monody on the Death of Charles II., had the good taste to refrain from any mention of the Queen, "sensible that her grief would be an apocryphal, as well as delicate theme." Otway and others had not this forbearance. In one of these poetical "addresses of condolence," the grief of the Queen for the loss of her royal consort is compared to that of the Blessed Virgin!

wards resided at Somerset-House, as Queen-dowager, and had a villa at Hammersmith, where she spent the summer months very privately. Her principal diversion during her widowhood was music, which she had always loved. She had concerts regularly, and on a splendid scale: in all other respects she lived with rigid economy. She was much respected by James II. and his court. In 1692 she returned to Lisbon, carrying with her (according to Walpole) some valuable pictures out of the royal collection, as part payment of a debt she asserted to be due to her from the crown; and died there December 30, 1705, at the age of sixty-three.

The picture at Windsor, from which the accompanying portrait is for the first time engraved, is by Sir Peter Lely. In every part, but more especially the drapery, it is admirably painted. She is represented as seated in a chair of state, and dressed in pearls and white satin, relieved by a dark olive curtain in the background. The attitude is rather unmeaning and undignified, but is probably characteristic. The face is round; the nose a little turned up; the eyes black and languishing; the mouth, though far from ugly, has an expression of pouting melancholy. This portrait appears to have been taken within the first two years after her marriage, while yet she loved her husband, and deeply resented those infidelities and negligences which she afterwards bore with such exemplary patience.

[To the foregoing elegant sketch of the life of

the Queen of Charles the Second, we are tempted to append a somewhat long extract from Clarendon, which shows how much she lost in the esteem of her friends by the ease with which she yielded and reconciled herself to her husband's mistresses. We think we see a concealed sneer in the following extract from the "Chimney Scuffle," a satire printed in 1662, and therefore not long after the marriage, and soon after the first quarrel between the royal pair, and the subsequent condescensions of the Queen to Lady Castlemaine, on whose name it contains a rather poor pun :—

"Clear that Augean stable; let no stain
Darken the splendor of our Charlemain,
Nor his court gate: may th' ladies of this time
Be emulators of our Katherine,
Late come, long wish'd :——

The world's new moulded: she who t' other day
Could chant and chirp like any bird in May,
Stor'd with caresses of the dearest sort
That art could purchase from a foreign court,
Limn'd so by Nature's pencil, as no part
But gave a wound, where'er it found an heart;
'A fortress and *main castle* of defence
Secur'd from all assailants saving Sense.'

But she's a convert and a mirrour now,
Both in her carriage and profession too;
Divorc'd from strange embraces: as my pen
May justly style her England's Magdalen.
Wherein she's to be held of more esteem
In being fam'd a convert of the Queen.
And from relapse that she secur'd might be,
She wisely daigns to keep her companie."

After relating the circumstance of Catherine's first introduction to Lady Castlemaine, the affronts and mortifications to which she was subjected by her opposition to the King's will, and particularly the abrupt

dismissal of her Portuguese attendants, Lord Clarendon goes on to observe,—"At last, when it was least expected or suspected, the Queen, on a sudden, let herself fall first to conversation and then to familiarity, and, even in the same instant, to a confidence with the lady: was merry with her in publick, talked kindly of her, and in private nobody used more friendly. This excess of condescension, without any provocation or invitation, except by multiplication of injuries and neglect, and after all friendships were renewed, and indulgence yielded to new liberty, did the Queen less good than her former resoluteness had done. Very many looked upon her with much compassion; commended the greatness of her spirit, detested the barbarity of the affronts she underwent, and censured them as loudly as they durst, not without assuming the liberty, sometimes, of insinuating to the King himself, how much his own honour suffered in the neglect and disrespect of her own servants, who ought, at least in publick, to manifest some duty and reverence towards her majesty; and how much he lost in the general affections of his subjects: and that, besides the displeasure of God Almighty, he could not reasonably hope for children by the Queen, which was the great if not the only blessing of which he stood in need, whilst her heart was so full of grief, and whilst she was continually exercised with such insupportable afflictions. And many, who were not wholly unconversant with the King, nor strangers to his temper and constitution, did believe that he grew weary of the struggle, and even ready to avoid the scandal that was so notorious, by the lady's withdrawing from the verge of the court, and

being no longer seen there, how firmly soever the friendship might be established. But this sudden downfal, and total abandoning her own greatness; this low demeanour, and even application to a person she had justly abhorred and worthily contemned, made all men conclude, that it was a hard matter to know her and, consequently, to serve her. And the King himself was so far from being reconciled by it, that the esteem, which he could not hitherto but retain in heart for her, grew much less. He concluded, that all her former aversion, expressed in those lively passions which seemed not capable of dissimulation, was all fiction, and purely acted to the life, by a nature crafty, perverse, and inconstant. He congratulated his own ill-natured perseverance; by which he discovered how he was to behave himself hereafter, and what remedies he was to apply to all future indispositions: nor had he, ever after, the same value of her wit, judgment, and her understanding, which he had formerly; and was well enough pleased to observe, that the reverence others had for all three was somewhat diminished."—Ed.]

Painted by Sir Peter Lely. Engraved by Thos Wright.

Portrait of
Elizabeth Countess of Rochford

THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

" Love is all gentleness and joy ;
Smooth are his looks, and soft his pace ;
Her Cupid is a blackguard boy,
That rubs his link full in your face ! "

EARL OF DORSET.

IF any faith may be given to the scandalous chronicles of that period, the court of Cromwell, with its cant and cropped heads, its " weel spread loaves, and lang wry faces," was not less licentious than that of Charles II.: the change was rather of manners than of morals; of costume, rather than of character. In the days of Oliver, Folly stalked about in solemn guise, and hid his bauble under a Geneva cloak; and in those of Charles, he flourished his coxcomb, and the " peal of his bells rang merrily out,"—and this was better at least than sanctified foolery and sober vice. " The *asinina stella*,"* if not more predominant, was at all events more brilliant. It was not so much the supremacy of wickedness, as the magnanimous contempt of appearances—the brave de-

* " Che s'io non erro al calcolar de' punti,
Par ch' asinina stella a noi predomini."

Salvator Rosa.

fiance of decorum that distinguished the court and age of Charles II. from the solemnity of Cromwell's, and the dulness of William's.

> "The sin was of our native growth, 'tis true;
> The *scandal* of the sin was wholly new."

The various causes which led to that general licence of manners which prevailed after the Restoration, are recorded by the historian, and do not fall within the province of these light Memoirs: one of them was undoubtedly the personal character of that vain and profligate woman who, in the commencement of his reign, ruled the court and the heart of Charles, and whose beauty and misconduct have doomed her to an infamous celebrity.

Sir William Villiers, descended from the eldest branch of the house of Villiers, (the younger branch becoming Dukes of Buckingham,) succeeded his uncle, Oliver St. John, in the title of Viscount Grandison, in the kingdom of Ireland. On the breaking out of the civil wars, he, with all his family, adhered to the King's party, and distinguished himself by his devoted loyalty and chivalrous bravery. At the siege of Bristol, in 1643, he was desperately wounded; and, being carried to Oxford, died there a few days afterwards, at the age of thirty. Lord Clarendon, who relates the manner of his death, adds this captivating and well-drawn portrait:—"Lord Grandison was a young man of so virtuous a habit of mind, that no temptation or provocation could corrupt him; so great a lover of justice and integrity, that no

example, necessity, or even the barbarities of this war, could make him swerve from the most precise rules of it; and of that rare piety and devotion, that the court, or camp, could not show a more faultless person, or to whose example young men might more reasonably conform themselves. His personal valour and courage of all kinds (for he had sometimes indulged so much to the corrupt opinion of honour as to venture himself in duels) were very eminent, insomuch as he was accused of being too prodigal of his person; his affection, zeal, and obedience to the King, was such as became a branch of that family." And he was wont to say, "that if he had not understanding enough to know the uprightness of the cause, nor loyalty enough to inform him of the duty of a subject, yet the very obligations of gratitude to the King, on the behalf of his house, were such as his life was but a due sacrifice; and therefore, he no sooner saw the war unavoidable, than he engaged all his brethren, as well as himself, in the service, and there were then three more of them in command in the army, where he was so unfortunately cut off." He married Mary, third daughter of Paul, Viscount Bayning, by whom he left an only daughter and heiress, Barbara Villiers, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland.

Of the early life and education of this too celebrated woman, I have not been able to collect any authentic information. She married, at the age of eighteen, Roger Palmer, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, and loyal adherent of the exiled King. Her first acquaintance with Charles probably commenced in Holland, whither

she accompanied her husband in 1659, when he carried to the King a considerable sum of money to aid in his restoration, and assisted him also by his personal services. But her connexion with Charles cannot be traced with any certainty before the very day of his entrance into London: on the evening of that day, Charles, instead of sleeping in the palace of his ancestors, to which he had just been restored, skulked away privately to the house of Sir Samuel Morland, at Vauxhall, where he had an assignation with Mrs. Palmer.

That an accomplished prince, in the prime of life, skilled in all the arts that ensnare her sex,—the sovereign for whose sake her father had fought and bled; whom she had just seen restored—*miraculously* restored, as it was then believed,—to the throne of his fathers, welcomed to his capital with almost delirious joy, and who, in such a moment, threw himself and his new-found kingdom at her feet, should have conquered the heart and triumphed over the virtue of a woman so vain and volatile, is not marvellous: she was only nineteen, and thrown, by the blind confidence or time-serving carelessness of her husband, into the very way of temptation. Thus far her frailty, if not excusable, might have been pardoned, if the end had not proved that personal affection for the King had little to do with her lapse from virtue, and that, in short, she was more of a Montespan than a La Vallière,—more of an Alice Pierce than a Jane Shore.

In a few months after the Restoration, Palmer was

created an Irish peer, with the title of Earl of Castlemaine. He, meekest of men, was, or affected to be, a little sulky and restive at first under his new dignities, but means were soon found to pacify him; and he afterwards submitted to the coronet, and other honours which his beautiful wife showered on his head, with a spirit of philosophy and resignation which was quite edifying.*

The passion of the King for Lady Castlemaine, and her influence over him, were at their height at the time that his marriage with Catherine of Portugal was, from political motives, resolved on. When the Queen's arrival at Portsmouth was announced in London, Charles was supping at Lady Castlemaine's house in the Strand.

* "But that which pleased me best was, that my Lady Castlemaine stood over against us upon a piece of White Hall. But methought it was strange to see her lord and her upon the same place, walking up and down, without taking notice one of another; only at first entry, he put off his hat, and she made him a very civil salute, but afterwards took no notice one of another; but both of them now and then would take their child, which the nurse held in her arms, and dandle it." This was on occasion of the Queen's triumphant entry into London, she being brought with great state by water from Hampton Court. Immediately after follows a trait of good-nature, which must not be suppressed, the rather because it is solitary: the worst, however, are not wholly bad. A scaffolding happened to fall at the moment, and Lady Castlemaine was the only one among the great ladies of court, who, from an impulse of humanity, ran down among the 'common rabble' to see what injury had been done, and took charge of a poor child which had been hurt in the crowd, "which methought was so noble. Anon came one booted and spurred, whom she talked with; and by and by, she being in her hair, she put on his hat, which was but an ordinary one, to keep the wind off: but it became her mightily, as every thing else do."—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 161.

Bonfires had been lighted, in token of respect and rejoicing, before every door in the street except hers—an omission which did not pass unobserved; nor did she attempt to conceal her despair, when the King left her to meet his bride. It was probably sincere; for she had as much reason to dread, as all good men had to hope from, the influence of a young and beloved Queen. Unhappily her fears and others' hopes proved groundless: the King could not break the fetters which her charms and her imperious temper had flung round him, and the Queen had not beauty and tact enough to win him from her rival.

Catherine had arrived in England with a fixed resolution not to admit Lady Castlemaine into her presence,—"her mother," she said, "had enjoined her not to do so:" but the King had determined otherwise; and the gay courtiers, who had the most influence over his mind, were precisely those who had every thing to hope from the misrule of Lady Castlemaine, and nothing to expect from the countenance of Catherine. Charles, like all weak men, had a dread of being governed by a *wife;* and they persuaded him that it was infinitely more magnanimous to be enslaved by a termagant mistress, than to comply with the reasonable demands of his Queen; and artfully represented the former, and not the latter, as the object of compassion. They observed, "that he had, by the charms of his person and of his professions, prevailed upon the affections and heart of a young and beautiful lady of a noble extraction, whose father had lost his life in the service of the crown; that she had

provoked the jealousy and rage of her husband to that degree, that he had separated himself from her; and now the Queen's indignation had made the matter so notorious to the world, that the disconsolate lady had no place of retreat left, but must be made an object of infamy and contempt to all her sex, and to the whole world."*

To give colour to these insinuations, Lady Castlemaine had fled from the house of her husband,—not forgetting, however, to carry with her all her jewels, plate, and furniture,—and went over to Richmond, to be nearer to Hampton Court, then the scene of battle. The issue of this affair has been given in the Memoir of Queen Catherine. Lady Castlemaine was created one of the ladies of the bed-chamber, and soon after lodged in Whitehall, where she occupied apartments immediately over those of the King.†

From this time may be dated the absolute power

* "Those discourses," continues Lord Clarendon, "together with a little book newly printed at Paris, according to the licence of that nation, of the amours of Henry IV., which was by them presented to him, and too concernedly read by him, made that impression upon his mind," &c.—*Clarendon's Continuation*, &c. It gratified the King to be compared to his grandfather, Henry IV. of France. In his fortunes and his failings there was some resemblance; in conduct and character, none whatever.

† See Pepys' Diary, vol. i., p. 212.—"My Lady Castlemaine is removed, as to her bed, from her own home to a chamber in Whitehall, next to the King's owne: which I am sorry to hear, though I love her much." Honest Mr. Pepys is oddly divided between his sense of right and his extravagant admiration for the beauty of Lady Castlemaine, whose very petticoats, trimmed with lace, "it did him good to look upon."

which this haughty and abandoned woman exercised over the easy-tempered Charles,—an influence never exercised but for her own aggrandizement and his dishonour, or the ruin of his best friends and most faithful servants. In her chamber, and among the profligate crew who surrounded her, was prepared the plot against the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, which ended in the disgrace and banishment of that great nobleman, the earliest and best friend of her father.* When he returned from Whitehall, after resigning the seals, she jumped out of bed in her night-dress to look down upon him as he passed, and stood upon her balcony, abusing him loudly, and in the coarsest terms her vulgar malice could suggest. When she quarrelled with the great Duke of Ormond, who had offended her in many ways, but chiefly by refusing to sanction her enormous drains upon the Irish treasury, she reviled him, swore at him, and finally told him "she hoped to see him hanged." To which the duke replied, with a grave humour becoming his character, that "far from wishing her ladyship's days shortened in return, his greatest desire was to see her grow old."

But her countenance was always extended to those who flattered her passions, ministered to her avarice, or

* The Lord Chancellor had refused to put the seal of office to some grant of a place which Lady Castlemaine had disposed of, saying he thought "the woman would sell every thing shortly;" which being repeated to her, she sent to tell him, "that she had disposed of this place, and did not doubt in a little time to dispose of *his*." She was as good as her word.

were subservient to her pleasures. She indeed gave encouragement to Dryden in the beginning of his literary career; but it seems to have been more through contradiction than any perception of merit, that she persisted in patronising his first and worst play, after it had been summarily *executed.* He repaid her interference by a copy of verses, which is a signal instance of the prostitution of his muse, and in which he compares her to Cato. One would have thought, that even a poet's imagination, fired by admiration and gratitude, could scarcely find or make any comparison between the voluptuous vixen Castlemaine and the Roman Cato; but, as Steele observes, "there is no stretching a metaphor too far when a lady is in the case."

The sums which this harpy contrived to appropriate from the funds of the state almost exceed belief. She was, to use Burnet's coarse expression in speaking of her, "enormously ravenous:" it was, however, rather rapacity than avarice; for what was obtained unworthily, was lavished as extravagantly. Besides a grant of £5322 a-year out of the post-office, to her and her heirs, she had twenty thousand a-year out of the customs.* What sums were occasionally paid to her out of the revenues of

* "Lord St. John, Sir R. Howard, Sir John Bennet, and Sir W. Bicknell, the brewer, have farmed the customs; they have signed and sealed ten thousand a-year *more* to the Duchess of Cleveland, who has likewise near ten thousand a-year out of the new farm of the Country Excise of beer and ale; £5000 a-year out of the post-office, and, they say, the reversion of all places in the Custom-house, the Green Wax, and indeed what not; all promotions, spiritual and temporal, pass under her cognizance."—*Andrew Marvel's Letters.* "Barclay (Berkeley) is still

Ireland cannot be ascertained: besides this income, immense in those days, she had at different times gifts in money, jewels, and plate, to an incredible amount; and this at the time when the King's household servants were cursing him because they had not bread to eat, and he himself wanted linen, and was stinted in writing-paper! *

Berkshire-House was purchased for her by the King, in 1668; and as it was of great extent, she added to her income by converting part of it into separate houses and letting them;† but all was too little to supply her monstrous expenditure. Among her other extravagancies was the vice of gaming: in one night she lost at Basset £25,000, and was accustomed to stake one thousand, and fifteen hundred pounds at a cast.

As the fair Castlemaine was one of those ladies who would "whisk the stars out of their spheres" rather than lose one iota of their will, it may be imagined that her connexion with the King was not one long summer's

Lieutenant of Ireland; but he was forced to come over to pay ten thousand pounds rent to his landlady, Cleveland."—*Ib.*

* "This day I was told that my Lady Castlemaine hath all the King's Christmas presents, made him by the peers, given to her, which is a most abominable thing: and that at the great ball she was much richer in jewels than the Queene and Duchesse (of York) put both together."—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 204.

† Berkshire-House was formerly the town mansion of the Howards, Earls of Berkshire, and afterwards of Lord Clarendon. It stood on the site of the Marquis of Stafford's princely residence, and the name of its former proprietor is still perpetuated in *Cleveland-row*.

day, all serenity and sunshine. In fact, not satisfied with "nodding him from the council-board" whenever the whim seized her, she gave way to such inexplicable caprices, and, upon the slightest cause, to such bursts of tempestuous passion, that she sometimes threw the whole court into an uproar, and drove the poor King half distracted. It is observable, that as soon as she was well-assured of her power over Charles, and understood his character, she never attempted to carry any point by tenderness or cajolery; but, by absenting herself from court, or by direct violence, she hectored him, as Pepys says, out of his wits,—

> "And, with bent lowering brows, as she would threat,
> She scowl'd and frown'd with froward countenance
> Unworthy of fair lady's comely governance."
>
> *Spenser.*

Charles, wearied by the din of her vituperative tongue, and pained by the disagreeable sight of so beautiful a face deformed by demon passions, hastened to relieve his eyes and ears by granting her demands, however exorbitant. At times, however, being driven past the bounds of patience, he would make an attempt at resistance, which was sure to end in his discomfiture. Some instances on record of her coarse manners and termagant temper are ludicrous, and some disgusting.*

* On a certain occasion, the King being engaged to sup with her, "there being a chine of beef to roast, and the tide rising into their kitchen that it could not be roasted there, and the cook telling her of it, she answered, 'Zounds! she must set the house on fire, but it must be roasted!' So it was carried to Mrs. Sarah's husband's, and there it was roasted."—*Pepys' Diary*, vol. i., p. 253.

Once, on some slighting words from the King, she called for her coach at a quarter of an hour's warning, and, taking with her her plate, jewels, and favourite servants, went off to Richmond; the King, under pretence of hunting, followed her there; and before he could prevail on her to return, he was forced to beg pardon on his knees, and, like a little boy that had been whipped, promised "to do so no more."

On another occasion it happened that the Queen, conversing in her drawing-room with the ladies in attendance, observed to Lady Castlemaine that she feared that the King took cold by staying so late abroad at her ladyship's house. Her ladyship answered, that the King did not stay late with *her:* on the contrary, he left her early; therefore she was not answerable for his taking cold: if he stayed late abroad, it must be *somewhere else.* The King, entering at that moment, overheard this insinuation, and sudden anger inspired him with unwonted spirit. He whispered in her ear that she was a bold impertinent woman, and commanded her to leave the court, and not appear again till he sent for her. The indignant fair one took him at his word, and retired to lodgings in Pall Mall. When she had remained there two days unnoticed, she began to be alarmed, and sent to ask permission to take her things from Whitehall. The King informed her she must come for them. To which, after a furious struggle between pride and policy, she condescended; and, the King meeting her there, was, after the usual submissions, forgiven, and harmony restored.

The Duke of Buckingham's disgrace, in 1667, was the occasion of a most bitter quarrel. The duke was her kinsman, some say her lover, or at least her worthy coadjutor in all schemes of mischief and extravagance; and she took up his cause with all the determined violence of her temper and disposition. The consequence was a regular hurricane. The King told her she was "a jade that meddled with things she had nothing to do with at all;" and the lady retorted by calling his most sacred majesty a *fool*. In the end she prevailed, as usual, and Buckingham was restored to favour.

On another occasion, the King ventured to express his doubts as to his being the father of her youngest child. She was then near her confinement; and in a transport of rage she exclaimed, or rather swore, for her exclamations were usually oaths, that "whoever was the father, the King should own it; and she would have it christened in the chapel at Whitehall, and owned for the King's, or she would bring it into the Whitehall gallery, and dash the brains of it out before the King's face;" and forthwith she retired to the house of Sir Daniel Hervey, and shut herself up. The King was obliged to follow her, hearing that she threatened to print his letters, a threat she was very capable of executing. He there made concessions on his knees, and she was prevailed on to return to Whitehall,—"not as a mistress, for she scorned him, but as a tyrant to command him." The last and most tempestuous of these disgraceful scenes ended in her being raised to the

dignity of Duchess. It is related by De Grammont in his happiest style of badinage. The King, it seems, had for some time shared her good graces with the accomplished Wycherly,* the handsome Churchill,† and a score of meaner rivals. But at length, though not particularly nice in such matters, and averse to excite the storms he found it so difficult to allay, he began to be somewhat scandalized at the open infidelities of a woman whom he had so publicly distinguished, and ventured a little advice and raillery on the subject of one of her lovers, (the "invincible Jermyn,") whom he considered a rival more contemptible and disreputable than Harte, Goodman, or Jacob Hall himself.‡ His imperious Sultana took fire instantly, and blazed away like a mine of gunpowder. Instead of defending herself, she attacked the King. She reproached him with the baseness of his *penchants*, his devotion to such idiots as Miss Stewart, Miss Wells, and that "*petite gueuse de comédienne* (meaning Nell Gwyn): then followed floods of tears, and paroxysms of rage, in which she threatened, like another Medea, to tear her children in pieces, and

* The commencement of her acquaintance with Wycherly is too *characteristic* to be given here. It may be found in Grainger, and in Dennis's Letters.

† Afterwards Duke of Marlborough. The five thousand pounds which the Duchess of Cleveland gave him, laid the foundation of his fortunes, by enabling him to purchase a commission. Yet he was afterwards known to refuse her twenty guineas, which she wanted to borrow from him at Basset.

‡ The two former were celebrated actors, and the latter a rope-dancer. Harte, of the King's company, had been a captain in the army, and was the finest actor of that day: he excelled in Othello. There is a picture of Harte in the Beauty-room at Windsor.

fire his palace over his head. The King had never ventured to contend for peace without paying pretty largely for it; for, what was to be done with a fury, who on these occasions, all beautiful as she was, resembled Medea much less than one of her dragons? In the present instance, though his attachment to the lady was on the decline, and Miss Stewart reigned the goddess paramount of the day, he was obliged to buy a reconciliation at a dear rate. The Chevalier de Grammont was called in as mediator, and drew up articles of peace; in which it was agreed that Lady Castlemaine's new lover should be sent to make a little tour into the country; that she should raise no more disturbances on the subject of Miss Wells and Miss Stewart; and, in consideration of so much amiable condescension on the lady's part, she should be elevated to the rank of a Duchess, with all the honours and privileges pertaining to the title, and her pension doubled, to enable her to support her new dignity with becoming *éclat*. Soon afterwards, "in consideration of her noble descent, her father's death in the service of the crown, and by reason (as the letters patent set forth) of her own *personal virtues*," she was created Baroness of Nonsuch, Countess of Southampton, and Duchess of Cleveland. The title of Southampton must have doubly gratified her, as having been that of her old enemy, the excellent Lord Southampton, who had frequently excited her utmost displeasure, by refusing to put his seal as Treasurer to her exorbitant grants of money, &c.

After this last rupture, and her elevation of rank, the

duchess withdrew from the court, though she still occasionally appeared there: her influence over the King did not entirely cease till the reign of the Duchess of Portsmouth began, but she was no longer all powerful; and gradually as she debased herself more and more by her excesses, she sank into neglect and contempt. Pepys alludes in his Diary to a quarrel about this time between Lady Castlemaine and the Duchess of Richmond, (the predecessor to the fair Stewart in that title,) which threw the whole court into confusion; "wherein the Duchess of Richmond did call my Lady Castlemaine Jane Shore, and hoped she should live to see her come to the same end." There was, in truth, some poetical justice in the catastrophe of the Duchess of Cleveland, though the Duchess of Richmond had not the comfort of living to witness it. On the death of the Earl of Castlemaine, in 1703, she married a man of desperate fortune and profligate habits, well known by the name of Beau Fielding, and unequalled in those days for the beauty of his person.* Fielding had married her for the sake of her money; and when she either could not, or would not, any longer supply his extravagancies, he so barbarously ill-treated her, that she was obliged to have recourse to a magistrate for protection against his outrages. Fortunately for her, it was discovered that he had a former wife living, a low woman, who had cheated him as he had cheated all the rest of her sex. He was prosecuted for bigamy, found guilty, but pardoned by Queen Anne. His conviction relieved the duchess from

* See "The Tatler," No. 50, for the "History of Orlando the Fair," *i. e.* the above-mentioned Beau Fielding: it is from the pen of Swift.

his brutality, but she did not long survive it: she died of a dropsy at her house at Chiswick, October 9, 1709, miserable, contemned, and neglected; leaving a name more fitted to "point a moral," than to "adorn a tale."

The Duchess of Cleveland was the mother of six children, three sons and three daughters. Charles Fitzroy, her eldest son by the King, was born in 1662, and created, during the lifetime of his mother, Baron Newberry, Earl of Chichester, and Duke of Southampton. On her death, he succeeded to the title of Duke of Cleveland, in which he was succeeded by his son William; after whose death, in 1774, the title became extinct, and has not since been revived.

Her second son, Henry Fitzroy, born in 1663, was created Baron of Sudbury, Viscount Ipswich, Earl of Euston, and Duke of Grafton. He was eminently handsome in his person, of a brave and martial spirit; but rough, illiterate, and rude in his manners. He married Isabella, only daughter and heiress of Harry Bennett, Earl of Arlington,* and was killed by a cannon

* This Duchess of Grafton was the most beautiful woman of her time; but it was in the court of William, and not in that of Charles, that she reigned supreme "lady of hearts," and was celebrated by all the wits and poets of the day. Her picture is among the "Beauties" at Hampton Court. She bore to the end of her long life a most irreproachable character. I am tempted to add the following entries from Evelyn's Diary, which throw considerable interest round her premature union with the Duke of Grafton: she was then five, and the Duke nine years old. "1672. Aug. 1. I was at the marriage of Lord Arlington's lovely daughter (a sweet child if ever there was any) to the Duke of Grafton,

ball at the siege of Cork, 1690, where he served under Marlborough as a volunteer. He was ancestor to the noble family of Fitzroy, in all its branches: the present Duke of Grafton being the fourth, and the present Lord Southampton the fifth, in descent from him.

George Fitzroy, her third son, was created by his father Earl and Duke of Northumberland. He was weak and dissipated, married meanly, and died without issue.

Anne Palmer Fitzroy, her eldest daughter, was born in 1661. The Earl of Castlemaine always considered this daughter as his offspring; but the King, by giving her the name of Fitzroy, assigning her the royal arms,

the King's natural son by the Duchess of Cleveland; the Archbishop of Canterbury officiated, the King and all the grandees of the court being present." The infant couple were married again in 1679, she being twelve years old and her husband sixteen. "I confess," says Evelyn, "I could give my Lady Arlington little joy, and so I plainly told her; but she said the King would have it so, and there was no going back. Thus this sweetest, hopefullest, most beautiful child, and most virtuous too, was sacrificed to a boy that has been rudely bred, without any thing to encourage them but his majesty's pleasure. I pray God the sweet child find it to her advantage; who, if my augury deceive me not, will in a few years be such a paragon, as were fit to make a wife to the greatest prince in Europe.

"1683. I went to compliment the Duchess of Grafton, now laying-in of her first child, a son, which she called for, that I might see it. She was become more beautiful, if it were possible, than before, and full of virtue and sweetness. She discoursed with me of many particulars with great prudence and gravity beyond her years." This youthful and lovely mother was then just fifteen. She lived to walk at the coronation of George II. as Countess of Arlington in her own right, and died in 1722.

and portioning her nobly at her marriage, seemed determined to claim a share of the parentage. She married Lennard Lord Dacre and Earl of Sussex, and left two daughters.

Charlotte Fitzroy, who rivalled her mother in beauty, but was far unlike her in every other respect, married the Earl of Litchfield, by whom she was the mother of eighteen children: one of her daughters, Lady Elizabeth Lee, married Young, the author of the *Night Thoughts*.

Barbara, her youngest daughter, whom the King acknowledged in public, but not in private, became a nun at Pontoise.

The beauty of the Duchess of Cleveland was of that splendid and commanding character, that dazzles rather than interests; it was, however, perfect in its kind. At a time when she was most unpopular, and her charms and excesses were creating disturbances in the court and disaffection in the country, she went to Bartholomew Fair to view "the rare puppet-show of Patient Grizzle," (by which, it is to be hoped, she was greatly edified). The rabble, recognising her equipage, followed it with hisses and curses; but when she stepped out, and looked round in all the proud consciousness of irresistible beauty, the people, struck with admiration, changed their curses into blessings "on her handsome face," though it had helped to undo a nation. The picture at Windsor (from which the portrait is engraved) represents her as Pallas, or Bellona: the last is certainly the

more appropriate character; it is full of the imperious expression of the original. The face is perfectly beautiful; the rich red lips are curled with arrogance and "womanish disdain," and the eyes look from under their drooping lids with a certain fierceness of expression; the action, the attitude, the accompaniments, are all those of a virago: she grasps the spear with the air of an all-conquering beauty, and leans on her shield as if she disdained to use it; while the grand tempestuous sky in the background, with broken gleams of light flashing across it, is in admirable keeping with the whole.

[In the amusing entries of Pepys' Diary, we may trace the different vicissitudes of the Duchess of Cleveland's reign over the King; vicissitudes, indeed, which were not very great, for when the King's attachment to her was diminished, she still kept her place by her own effrontery. She was evidently much alarmed on the arrival of the Queen, fearing at once to lose her influence; and there is every reason for believing that her introduction at Hampton Court was a plan of her own, a resolution to make a desperate struggle for superiority at the outset. She succeeded, and the first years of the King's marriage were those of her greatest power. She still, however, showed outwardly, at least at times, something like attention to the Queen. Pepys, whose curiosity led him to see the ceremonies at the Queen's Catholic chapel, when it was first opened, which was not long after the duchess had been received a Maid of Honour, describes the Queen's devoutness, and adds,

"but what pleased me best was to see my dear Lady Castlemaine, who, though a Protestant, did wait upon the Queene to chapel." Pepys's admiration of the beauty of the royal mistress was now at its height, so as even to draw a rebuke from 'his lady,' "she calling her my lady, and the lady I admire." In the latter part of 1663, her influence seems to have been somewhat on the decline, and from this time till 1666, she was in part eclipsed by the beauty of Miss Stewart. It is singular how the admiration of Pepys changes with the King's love. In 1663, when he hears that Castlemaine is declining in the royal favour, he observes, "Saw my Lady Castlemaine, who, I fear, is not so handsome as I have taken her for, and now she begins to decay something. This is my wife's opinion also." Miss Stewart was now the object of his praise. "Mrs. Stewart is now the greatest beauty I ever saw, I think, in my life; and, if ever woman can, do exceed my Lady Castlemaine." In 1664 he observes, "My wife tells me the sad news of my Lady Castlemaine's being now become so decayed, that one would not know her; at least far from a beauty, which I am sorry for." Again, in the early part of 1666, "I was sorry to see my Lady Castlemaine; for the mourning forcing all the ladies to go in black, with their hair plain, and without spots, I find her to be a much more ordinary woman than ever I durst have thought she was; and, indeed, is not so pretty as Mrs. Stewart." Poor Pepys! how many circumstances, independent of their own taste, influence people in judging of beauty and excellence.

It was not long after the period when the last of

these observations was made, that occurred the anecdote above related by Mrs. Jameson, (at p. 83.) In the latter part of this year, though she seems still to have been out of favour, the King paid Lady Castlemaine's debts to the amount of thirty thousand pounds; and after the marriage of Miss Stewart to the Duke of Richmond, in 1667, she regained all her influence, and, to use the expression of the Diary, hectored the King to whatever she would. "My cousin Roger," says Pepys, "told us as a thing certain, that my Lady Castlemaine hath made a bishop lately; namely, her uncle, Dr. Glenham, who, I think they say, is Bishop of Carlisle; a drunken, swearing raskal, and a scandal to the church; and do now pretend to be Bishop of Lincoln, in competition with Dr. Raynbow, who is reckoned as worthy a man as most in the church for piety and learning: which are things so scandalous to consider, that no man can doubt but we must be undone that hears of them." Her conduct now seems so far to have increased her unpopularity, and things appeared to be in so critical a posture, that in 1667 there was a serious design of getting rid of her for a time, in order to propitiate the parliament. It was rumoured that she would go to France with a pension; but her influence was too high, and she could not be brought to agree to the proposal. In the May of the following year Pepys observes, "My Lady Castlemaine is, it seems, now mightily out of request, the King coming little to her, and then she mighty melancholy and discontented." The Duke of Buckingham, who now came into full power, was also suddenly opposed to her, as we learn from the same authority; and the design of

sending her to France seems to have been again entertained towards the end of 1668. A letter preserved in the British Museum, (MS. Harl. No. 7001,) dated from London, the 5th of December in that year, informs us that "a report is here also that my Lady Castlemaine intends to make a short journey into France; but I believe the resolution is not yet fixt, though to invite her my Lord Hawbry offers himselfe to attend her thither." Soon after this, in the January of 1668-9, we learn from Pepys "that my Lady Castlemaine is now in a higher command over the King than ever,—not as a mistress, for she scorns him, but as a tyrant to command him."

From this time we hear little more of Lady Castlemaine in Pepys. The project of sending her to France seems at a later period to have been put in practice, and she was residing there in 1678. The following letter, from the British Museum, shows that even there she was still intriguing:—

Ralph Duke of Mountague to his Cousin.*

"Paris, March 29, 1678. O. S.

"Sir,

"I am out of countenance at all the troubles you are pleased to give yourself in my concerns. I have heard something of what you tell me of the Queen's engagement to my Lady Arlington; but so many things come between the cup and the lip, especially at court, that till things are done, one must never despair, no

* He was at this time ambassador at the French court.

more than I do of being Secretary of State, if my lord continues his favour to me, and can work off Sir William Temple. I know for certain that there is a great cabal to bring in Mr. Savile, who writ a letter last post to my Lady Cleveland, that his fortune depended upon her coming over, for that he had engaged his unkle, Secretary Coventry, for his place, but could not compass money to buy it, except she got him the King's leave to sell his bedchamber place, and some additional money to help. You may let my Lord Treasurer know this, but it must be kept very secret, for else it would hinder me knowing many things that may be for his service. It is not very well in Mr. Savile, who has those obligations to my Lord Treasurer, to manage such an affair under-hand. For my part, I care not for the place, except I come in with his favour and kindness. I have tried no other ways to compass it, neither will I. Pray put my Lord Treasurer in mind of me, with the assurance that he has no servant truer to him than myself, nor more entirely.

Dear Cousin,

Your most faithful humble servant,

R. MOUNTAGUE."

We find, indeed, that not long after this letter was written, the duchess was in England, whether on the errand there alluded to or not, we cannot venture to say. On her return to Paris, she addressed the following letter to the King. It is preserved among the Harleian manuscripts, in a volume of letters, numbered 7006, and affords us a singularly curious picture of her intriguing

spirit, now smarting under the united stings of disappointment, humiliation, and anger.

"PARIS, TUESDAY THE 28TH, —78.

"I was never so surprized in my holle life-time as I was, at my coming hither, to find my Lady Sussex gone from my house and monastery where I left her, and this letter from her, which I here send you the copy of. I never saw in my holle life-time such government of herself as she has had, since I went into England. She has never been in the monastery two days together, but every day gone out with the ambassador;* and has often lain four days together at my house, and sent for her meat to the ambassador, he being always with her till five o'clock in the morning, they two shut up together alone, and would not let any maistre d'hôtel wait, nor any of my servants, only the ambassador's. This made so great a noise at Paris, that she is now the holle discourse. I am so much afflicted that I can hardly write this for crying, to see a child that I doted on as I did on her, should make so ill return, and join with the worst of men to ruin me. For sure never malice was like the ambassador's, that only because I would not answer to his love, and the importunities he made to me, was resolved to ruin me. I hope your majesty will yet have that justice and consideration for me, that though I have done a foolish action, you will not let me be ruined by this most abominable man. I do confess to you that I did write a foolish letter to the Chevalier de Châtillon, which letter

* Ralph Mountague, afterwards Duke of Mountague.

I sent inclosed to Madam de Pallas, and sent hers in a packet I sent to Lady Sussex by Sir Henry Tichborn; which letter she has either given to the ambassador, or else he had it by his man, to whom Sir Henry Tichborn gave it, not finding my Lady Sussex. But as yet I do not know which of the ways he had it, but I shall know as soon as I have spoke with Sir Henry Tichborn. But the letter he has, and I doubt not but he has or will send it to you. Now all I have to say for myself is, that you know as to love, one is not mistress of one's self, and that you ought not to be offended at me, since all things of this nature is at an end with you and I, so that I could do you no prejudice. Nor will you, I hope, follow the advice of this ill man, who in his heart I know hates you, and were it not for his interest would ruin you if he could. For he has neither conscience nor honor, and has several times told me, that in his heart he despised you and your brother; and that for his part, he wished with all his heart that the parliament would send you both to travel, for you were a dull governable fool, and the duke a wilful fool. So that it were yet better to have you than him, but that you always chose a greater beast than yourself to govern you. And when I was to come over, he brought me two letters to bring to you, which he read both to me before he sealed them. The one was a man's, that he said you had great faith in; for that he had at several times foretold things to you that were of consequence,* and that you believed him in all things, like a changeling as you were. And that now he had wrote you word, that in a few months the King of

* See Burnet's History of his Own Times, vol. i., p. 422.

France and his son were threatened with death, or at least with a great fit of sickness, in which they would be in great danger, if they did not die; and that therefore he counsell'd you to defer any resolutions either of war or peace till some months were past; for that if this happened, it would make a great change in France. The ambassador, after he had read this to me, said, 'Now the good of this is,' said he, 'that I can do what I will with this man; for he is poor, and a good sum of money will make him write whatever I will.' So he proposed to me that he and I should join together in the ruin of my Lord Treasurer and the Duchess of Portsmouth, which might be done thus:—The man, though he was infirm and ill, should go into England, and there, after having been a little time, to sollicit you for money; for that you were so base, that though you employed him, you let him starve; so that he was obliged to give him 50*l.*, and that the man had writ several times to you for money. And, says he, when he is in England, he shall tell the King things that he foresees will infallible ruin him; and so wish those to be removed, as having an ill star, that would be unfortunate to you if they were not removed: but if that were done, he was confident you would have the most glorious reign that ever was. This, says he, I am sure I can order so as to bring to good effect, if you will. And in the mean time, I will try to get Secretary Coventry's place, which he has a mind to part with, but not to Sir William Temple; because he is the Treasurer's creature, and he hates the Treasurer; and I have already employed my sister to talk with Mr. Cook, and to mind him to engage Mr. Coventry not to part with it as yet,

and he has assured my Lady Harvey he will not. And my Lord Treasurer's lady and Mr. Bertie are both of them desirous I should have it. And when I have it, I will be damn'd if I do not quickly get to be Lord Treasurer; and then you and your children shall find such a friend as never was. And for the King, I will find a way to furnish him so easily with money for his pocket and wenches, that we will quickly out Bab. May, and lead the King by the nose. So when I had heard him out, I told him I thank'd him, but that I would not meddle with any such thing: and that, for my part, I had no malice to my Lady Portsmouth, or to the Treasurer, and therefore would never be in any plot to destroy them. But that I found the character which the world gave him was true: which was, that the Devil was not more designing than he was, and that I wondered at it; for sure all these things working in his brain must make him very uneasy, and would at last make him mad. 'Tis possible you may think I say this out of malice. 'Tis true he has urged me beyond all patience: but what I tell you here is most true; and I will take the sacrament on it whenever you please. 'Tis certain I would not have been so base as to have informed against him for what he had said before me, had he not provoked to it in this violent way that he has. There is no ill thing which he has not done me, and that without any provocation of mine, but that I would not love him. Now, as to what relates to my daughter Sussex, and her behaviour to me, I must confess that afflicts me beyond expression, and will do much more, if what he has done be by your orders. For though I

have an entire submission to your will, and will not complain whatever you inflict upon me; yet I cannot think you would have brought things to this extremity with me, and not have it in your nature ever to do cruel things to any thing living. I hope you will not therefore begin with me; and if the ambassador has not received his orders from you, that you will severely reprehend him for this inhuman proceeding. Besides, he has done what you ought to be very angry with him for. For he has been with the King of France, and told him that he had intercepted letters of mine by your order; by which he had been informed that there was a kindness between me and the Chevalier de Chatillon; and therefore you bad him take a course in it, and stop my letters; which accordingly he has done. And that upon this you order'd him to take my children from me, and to remove my Lady Sussex to another monastery; and that you was resolved to stop all my pensions, and never to have any regard to me in any thing. And that if he would oblige your majesty, he should forbid the Chevalier de Chatillon ever seeing me, upon the displeasure of losing his place, and being forbid the court, for he was sure you expected this from him. Upon which the King told him, that he could not do any thing of this nature: for that this was a private matter, and not for him to take notice of. And that he could not imagine that you ought to be so angry, or indeed be at all concerned; for that all the world knew, that now all things of gallantry were at an end with you and I. And that being so, and so publick, he did not see why you should be offended at my loving anybody. That it was a thing so common

nowadays to have a gallantry, that he did not wonder at any thing of this nature. And when he saw the King take the thing thus, he told him if he would not be severe with the Chevalier de Chatillon upon your account, he supposed he would be so upon his own: for that in the letters he had discovered, he had found that the Chevalier had proposed to me the engaging of you in the marriage of the Dauphin and Mademoiselle:* and that was my greatest business into England.† That before I went over, I had spoke to him of the thing and would have engaged him in it; but that he refused it: for that he knew very well the indifference you had whether it was so or no, and how little you cared how Mademoiselle was married: that since I went into England it was possible I might engage somebody or other in this matter to press it to you; but that he knew very well, that in your heart you cared not whether it was so or no: that this business was set on foot by the Chevalier. Upon which the King told him, that if he would shew him any letters of the Chevalier de Chatillon to that purpose, he should then know what he had to say to him; but till he saw those letters, he would not punish him without a proof for what he did. Upon which the ambassador shewed a letter, which he pretended one part of it was *double entendre*. The King said he could not see that there was any thing relating to it, and so left him, and said to a person there, 'Sure the ambassador was

* Mademoiselle was the daughter of Philip Duke of Orleans, and Henriette, sister of King Charles II.

† This was Mountague's own proposal, made to the King in his letter to him of Jan. 10th, 1677-8, preserved in the Danby Papers, p. 48.

the worst man that ever was; for because my Lady Cleveland will not love him, he strives to ruin her the basest in the world, and would have me to sacrifice the Chevalier de Chatillon to his revenge; which I shall not do, till I see better proofs of his having meddled in the marriage of the Dauphin and Mademoiselle than any yet the ambassador has shewed me.' This methinks is what you cannot but be offended at, and I hope you will be offended with him for his holle proceeding to me, and let the world see you will never countenance the actions of so base and ill a man. I had forgot to tell you that he told the King of France, that many people had reported that he had made love to me; but there was nothing of it; for that he had too much respect for you to think of any such thing. As for my Lady Sussex, I hope you will think fit to send for her over, for she is now mightily discoursed of for the ambassador. If you will not believe me in this, make enquiry into the thing, and you will find it to be true. I have desired Mr. Kemble to give you this letter, and to discourse with you at large upon this matter, to know your resolution, and whether I may expect that justice and goodness from you which all the world does. I promise you that for my conduct, it shall be such, as that you nor nobody shall have occasion to blame me. And I hope you will be just to what you said to me, which was at my house, when you told me you had letters of mine; you said, Madam, all that I ask of you for your own sake is, live so for the future as to make the least noise you can, and I care not who you love.' Oh! this noise that is had never been, had it not been for the ambassador's malice.

I cannot forbear once again saying, I hope you will not gratify his malice in my ruin."

At the beginning of the year 1679, the Duchess of Cleveland was again in England, contrary it would seem to the King's will; for in the same volume which contains the preceding letter, is also preserved the following order from the King to the duchess, that she should immediately quit the country.

"WHITEHALL, FEB. Y^R 28, 78-9.

"I have already given you my reasones at large, why I think it fitt that you should absent yourself for some time beyond sea: as I am truely sorry for the occasion, so you may be sure I shall desire it no longer than it will be absolutely necessary both for your good and my service. In y^e meantime I think it proper to give you notice under my hand, that I expect this compliance from you, and desire that you may believe with what trouble I write this to you, there being nothing I am more sensible off, than y^e constant kindness you have ever had for me; and I hope you are so just as to think nothing can ever change me from being

truely and kindly
Yours,
CHAS. REX."

ED.]

Painted by Sir Peter Lely.

Engraved by J. Thomson.

La Belle Hamilton

afterwards

Countess De Grammonde.

London, Published by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street, 1838.

THE COUNTESS DE GRAMMONT.

"A woman of that rare behaviour,
So qualified, that admiration
Dwells round about her; of that perfect spirit,
That admirable carriage,
That sweetness in discourse—young as the morning,
Her blushes staining his."

FLETCHER.

THE COUNTESS DE GRAMMONT, or rather, to give her the fair and merited title by which she is better known, LA BELLE HAMILTON—young, beautiful, wise, and witty, and discreet withal, "even to detraction's desperation," seemed to have been placed in Charles's court purposely to redeem the credit of her sex. She moved, in that profligate sphere, in an orbit of her own: there were some, indeed, rash enough to reach at stars because they shone upon them, but she was beyond a mere coxcomb's flight; and on she passed, looking superior down in all the majesty of virtue, and all the light of loveliness.

"Tal vagheggiata in ciel o luna, o stella,
Che segue altiera il suo viaggio, et splende."

La Belle Hamilton!—the very name has a spell in it of power to carry us back a century and a half. What

bright visions rise of flirtations at Summer Hill, and promenades at Tunbridge Wells!—of Maids of Honour, *coiffées à la négligence*, and gay gallants in perfumed periwigs!—what corantos, and galliards, and court balls, and country frolics; and poor Lady Muskerry and her *bambino*, and her costume *à la Princesse de Babylon!*—But we must descend to grave biography, and take things in order. The advice of the giant Moulineau, "*Bélier, mon ami! commencez au commencement*," is excellent; particularly when we are writing or reading the life of a celebrated beauty,—where the conclusion is to the beginning, like a musty moral out of Epictetus tacked to the end of a fairy tale.

Sir George Hamilton, fourth son of James first Earl of Abercorn, after distinguishing himself greatly in the civil wars, retired to France on the death of the King, his master. He resided abroad for several years, had a command in the French army, and in France several of his children were born and most of them educated; which accounts for the predilection they afterwards showed for that country.* At the Restoration, Sir George Hamilton returned to England with a numerous family of gallant sons and lovely daughters; among them ELIZABETH HAMILTON, his eldest daughter, who being then just of an age to be introduced at court, soon became one of its principal ornaments.

She appeared in that gay and splendid circle with

* Two of Miss Hamilton's brothers died in the service of France, with the title of Count.

many advantages. She was of noble descent, allied to the most illustrious families of England, Scotland, and Ireland; she was the niece of the Duke of Ormond, her mother being the sister of that great nobleman; her eldest brother was groom of the bedchamber, and a special favourite of the King; her two younger brothers were distinguished among the brave and gay: she herself united to a most captivating person and manner, such accomplishments as few women of her time possessed, and which she had cultivated during her father's exile. It does not appear that Miss Hamilton accepted any ostensible office near the person of the Queen, or of the Duchess of York; but she was soon distinguished by the favour of both, more particularly by that of the duchess, and was habitually included in their most select circles, as well as in all the balls, masques, banquets, and public festivities of the court.

It was at this time that De Grammont first met her; but it was long after his marriage that he dictated to her brother Anthony that enchanting description of her which appears in his Memoirs. The lover-like feeling which breathes through the whole—the beauty, delicacy, and individuality of the portrait, show that De Grammont, with all his frivolity and inconstancy, still remembered with tenderness, after a union of twenty years, the charms which had first touched and fixed his volatile heart.

She was then just arrived at that age, when the budding girl expands into the woman: her figure was tall,

rather full, but elegantly formed: and to borrow Lord Herbert's beautiful expression, "varied itself into every grace that can belong either to rest or motion." She had the finest neck and the loveliest hand and arm in the world; her forehead was fair and open; her hair dark and luxuriant, always arranged with the most exquisite taste, but with an air of natural and picturesque simplicity, which meaner beauties in vain essayed to copy; her complexion, at a time when the use of paint was universal, owed nothing to art; her eyes were not large, but sparkling and full of expression; her mouth, though not a little haughtiness is implied in the curve of the under lip, was charming; and the contour of her face perfect.

The soul which Heaven had lodged in this fair person was worthy of its shrine. In those days, the very golden age of folly and affectation, the Beauties, by prescriptive right, might be divided into two factions, whom I shall call the *languishers* and the *sparklers*. The languishers were those who, being dull by nature, or at least not bright, affected an extreme softness—lounged and lolled—simpered and sighed—lisped or drawled out their words—half shut their eyes—and moved as if "they were not born to carry their own weight:" the sparklers were those who, upon the strength of bright eyes and some natural vivacity and impertinence, set up for female wits; in conversation they attempted to dazzle by such sallies as would now be scarcely tolerated from the most abandoned of their sex; they were gay, airy, fluttering, fantastical, and talkative; they dealt in bon mots

and repartees; they threw their glances right and left, *à tort et à travers*; and piqued themselves upon taking hearts by a *coup-de-main*. Miss Hamilton belonged to neither of these classes: though lively by nature, she had felt, perhaps, the necessity of maintaining a reserve of manner which should keep presumptuous fops at a distance. She wore her feminine dignity as an advanced guard,—her wit as a body of reserve. She did not speak much, but what she said was to the purpose,—just what the occasion demanded, and no more. *Fière à toute outrance* whenever she was called upon to stand on the defensive, she was less possessed with the idea of her own merit than might have been supposed; and, far from thinking her consequence increased by the number of her lovers, she was singularly fastidious with regard to the qualifications of those whom she admitted upon the list of aspirants.

De Grammont had hitherto received few repulses; but "*heureux sans être aimé*," he began to be weary of pursuing conquests so little worth. Miss Hamilton was something new, something different from any thing he had yet encountered in the form of woman. He soon perceived that the stratagems he had hitherto found all-prevailing,—flattery and *billets doux*, French fans and *gants de Martial*,*—would be entirely misplaced in his present pursuit: he laid aside his usual methods of pro-

* Martial was a famous Parisian glove-maker of that time. "Est-ce que Martial fait les épigrammes aussi bien que les gants?" asks Molière's Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, in allusion to his Latin namesake. The English translator of the Mémoires de Grammont has rendered Miss

ceeding,* and, all his powers of captivating called forth by a real and deep attachment, he bent his whole soul to please; and he succeeded.

Meantime he had many rivals, but not such as were calculated to give him much uneasiness. Among them, the first, in rank at least, was the Duke of York, who became enamoured of Miss Hamilton's picture, which he saw at Sir Peter Lely's, and straight fell to ogling the fair original with all his might. The duke was extremely fond of hunting; and on his return from these expeditions, when he joined the circle in the duchess's drawing-room, he stationed himself near Miss Hamilton, and while he amused her with the exploits of himself, and his horses, and his dogs, his eyes expressed what his tongue left unsaid. It would sometimes happen, indeed, that those tender interpreters of his flame would wink and close "*au fort de leur lorgnerie;*" for princes, like other men, are subject to fatigue as well as love. The duchess, secure in the principles and character of her young favourite, never treated her with so much countenance and friendship as at this time. Miss Hamilton herself affected not to perceive the duke's passion; and when she was *obliged* to take notice of it, "elle prenait la peine de s'en divertir avec tout le respect du monde." Nor

Hamilton's "deux ou trois paires de gants de Martial" into "two or three pair of military gloves,"—a blunder only equalled by the translation of "Love's last Shift" into "La dernière chemise de l' amour."

* They were rather singular.—"Dès qu'une femme vous plait," says St. Evremond to him, "vôtre prémier soin est d'apprendre si elle est aimée d'un autre, et le second de la faire enrager,—car de vous en faire aimer n'est que le dernier de vos soins."

was she more easily pleased on the score of honourable proposals.

> "So much the more as she refused to love,
> So much the more she loved was and sought."

The Duke of Richmond was a gambler and a sot; but he stood nearest in blood to the throne after the Duke of York, and was considered the first match in the kingdom. Miss Hamilton thought otherwise. The duke, though much enamoured, demurred at making proposals, on the score of the lady's fortune; and she never forgave him. In vain the King interfered, and condescended to solicit her in his favour; in vain he offered to portion her nobly, in consideration of the services of her father and his own relationship to the duke,—he was rejected unequivocally. She could resist the invincible Jermyn, undazzled by the glare of that all-conquering reputation which found Lady Castlemaine an easy prey, and which even the fair Jennings could not withstand. She refused the Earl of Arundel, (afterwards Duke of Norfolk,) who laid himself, his expectant dukedom, and his thirty thousand a-year, at her feet; and disdained to be the first peeress of England at the expense of marrying a fool. The elder Russel tendered to her acceptance his "latter summer," and his vast possessions; the younger Russel, his nephew, did his best to supplant his uncle, with no better success; and Berkeley, Earl of Falmouth,* the personal friend and favourite both of

* Lord Clarendon says, that Berkeley was "one upon whom the King had set his affection so much, that he had never denied any thing he asked for himself or any body else." He married the beautiful Miss Bagot, and was killed in the great sea-fight in 1665.

the King and the Duke of York, whose rank, riches, and influence rendered him one of the greatest subjects in the kingdom; a man of pleasure by profession, vain, bold, and quick of wit,—even *he* confessed to St. Evremond, that "the possession of Miss Hamilton was alone wanting to crown all his desires; but that he had too much pride to owe her hand to the interference of her parents, and *dared* not hazard the refusal he anticipated from herself." De Grammont was not discouraged by the number, rank, and pretensions of his competitors: he was, in truth, but a younger brother, a banished man, under the displeasure of his own sovereign, deprived of his commission, and with no other resource but the gaming-table to supply his expensive habits; but he was handsome and brave, and possessed of unequalled powers of pleasing whenever he chose to exert them. He had the highest possible opinion of the understanding of his mistress, and his opinion of his own merit was not such as to induce him to despair.

Meanwhile Miss Hamilton, though considerably occupied and interested by the assiduities of her captivating lover, found time and thoughts to give to other matters. She was wary and proud from the circumstances in which she was placed; but she had all the light-heartedness of youth, and was more than once seized with the whim of mingling a little innocent mischief, by way of variety, with the mischief of another sort with which she was surrounded. A fit subject for her mirthful humour presented itself in her cousin, Lady Muskerry.*

* Margaret de Burgh, daughter of the Earl of Clanricarde, married

Lady Muskerry was not deficient in understanding, nor yet in good-nature; but she was to the last degree ridiculous and eccentric,—as mad as the Duchess of Newcastle, but after a less dignified fashion. She was excessively vain; extravagantly fond of dress, without a particle of taste; and a more indefatigable and enthusiastic dancer than her majesty the Queen, with even less capability of shining in that accomplishment; for she was deformed in her person, and Nature had shown an undue partiality to one leg, by lengthening it at the expense of the other. It was the constant care of Lord Muskerry (a very good sort of man) to prevent his wife from rendering him supremely ridiculous by the exhibitions she was accustomed to make of herself before the whole court. But in vain; for the dancing mania was so strong upon her, that no restraint, short of durance under lock and key, could keep her in order.

The Queen, who could only please her husband by flattering his taste for pleasure,* announced her intention of giving a masked ball, which was to exceed in magnificence all the entertainments which had been given since her marriage. The guests were to represent bands from different nations, and each ticket contained

to Lord Muskerry, eldest son of the Earl of Clancarty. Lady Muskerry was a great heiress, and, in spite of her deformity of person, was three times married.

* "La Reine avait de l'esprit, et mettait tous ses soins à plaire au Roi par les complaisances qui coutaient le moins à sa tendresse. Elle était attentive aux plaisirs et aux amusemens qu'elle pouvait fournir, surtout lorsqu' elle devait en être."

the name of a lady and a gentleman, who were considered as partners for the night: the costume in which they were to appear was also indicated. The King, who had much good-nature and was perfectly *au fait* of all the intrigues which were going forward in his court, contrived that his guests should be paired as agreeably as possible to themselves, and assigned to the Chevalier de Grammont the delightful task of conducting Miss Hamilton. His majesty also left him the choice of the costume in which he would choose to appear. De Grammont, with the ready politeness of his nation, replied, "that as he had resided long enough in his majesty's court to become almost an Englishman, and even to be mistaken for one, he should enroll himself in the French corps, and disguise himself *à la Française:*" and he sent off his valet to Paris immediately, to order the most splendid dress that could be procured for this grand occasion.

Meantime, Lord Muskerry and his *chère moitié* were both in a fever of apprehension: he, lest his wife should be invited; and she, lest by any treasonable practices on his part she should be excluded. He took his measures so effectually, that she was passed over in the list of invitations, the Queen being well content to spare her *fête* the ridicule of such an exhibition. Lady Muskerry fretted with suspense and impatience; she was sure there was some mistake,—it was not possible that upon an occasion which gave her such an illustrious opportunity of shining in her favourite accomplishment, she should be excluded from court. She made Miss Hamilton the

confidant of all her hopes and fears; and Miss Hamilton, possessed by the arch-spirit of mischief, determined to amuse herself and her brothers at the expense of her ridiculous cousin. A ticket was prepared with excellent device, in imitation of her own, which invited Lady Muskerry to the court ball, and bore the Queen's command that she should appear *en Babylonienne.* A page, disguised in the royal livery, delivered this to Lady Muskerry, with an apology for the mistake which had caused so long a delay. But Lady Muskerry was in too great a rapture to listen to apologies; thrice she kissed, upon her knees, the gracious billet which opened the door to paradise, and a treble gratuity was ordered to the fortunate page.

She then sat down to consider the important affair of her dress. The subject was embarrassing, and the time was short. She had never been in Babylon in her life; but others, she thought, might be better informed than herself: she therefore spent two days, driving about to consult all her acquaintances upon the subject of her Babylonian attire, — among the rest Miss Hamilton. She took care, however, to keep her good fortune a profound secret from her husband; anticipating a degree of opposition in that quarter which she had not courage to brave: like many of her sex, she could rebel, but dared not disobey. Various were the tastes and opinions of those she consulted; and Lady Muskerry, that she might be assured of being in the right, adopted the suggestions of all; so that even Miss Hamilton herself could never have anticipated any thing so marvellously absurd,

or so extravagant, as the appearance her ladyship made *en Babylonienne.*

The night at length arrived; but, to the amazement of the whole court, De Grammont, hitherto renowned for his magnificence and gallantry, was not only one of the last to make his appearance, but when he did lead up Miss Hamilton, it was observed that though he wore a wig so vast, so powdered, and so essenced, that it eclipsed even that of Sir George Hewit*—the finest point-bands and ruffles, and the smallest hat that had ever appeared, yet his coat was merely an ordinary court-dress, rich indeed, but totally unbefitting the occasion. The count replied to the King's raillery by relating, with his unequalled spirit and pleasantry, the history of his hapless *costume à la Française;* which, according to his knavish valet, had been swallowed up in a quicksand near Calais. "But à-propos! sire," continued the count, when he had finished a story which threw the King and court into convulsions of laughter; "may I presume to ask your majesty who is that goblin *en masque,* whom I have encountered at the entrance? She had nearly laid violent hands upon me as I entered, insisting that I must be the cavalier appointed to lead her in the dance! May I perish, sire! if I do not think she has dropped from some planet, to lie in ambuscade at your palace gate and seize upon unwary cavaliers, for nothing beneath the moon was ever so monstrous or fantastic. She is enveloped in at least sixty yards of silver gauze,

* The beau *par excellence,* the original Sir Fopling Flutter of the day.

and carries a pyramid like that of Cheops on her head, '*garnie de cent mille brimborions.*'"

At this description the courtiers gazed at each other. The Queen looked round her wonder-struck, well assured that all whom she had invited were then present. "Odds-fish!" exclaimed the King laughing, "I have it! It is some new extravaganza of that crack-brained Duchess of Newcastle!"—and, to the consternation of those in the secret, and the delight of those who were not, he commanded that her Grace should be instantly admitted.

It was now Miss Hamilton's turn to be alarmed, and to blush and tremble behind her fan; for if Lady Muskerry had been introduced to the royal presence in her present grotesque garb, the jest would have gone much farther than she intended. Lord Muskerry, however, relieved her from her terrors. He had been standing in the circle while De Grammont was speaking, and whispered Miss Hamilton, "Now I, for my part, would lay a wager that it is another mad woman; and that no other than my own fantastic fool of a wife!" He immediately offered himself to execute the royal commission, and found her accordingly, still seated in her carriage at the gate, in a paroxysm of despair, and raving against the faithless cavalier who had been appointed to attend upon her. He conducted her home by main force, locked her up in her chamber, and placed a sentinel at her door Miss Hamilton this time escaped undiscovered. For some other of her malicious frolics, played off at the

expense of Miss Blague, "*aux blondes paupières*," and that laughter-loving gipsy, Miss Price, who deserved the extremity of mischief, and the scene at Tunbridge Wells, in which poor Lady Muskerry was again made to play a principal part, the reader who has not read the *Mémoires de Grammont*, (if such there be,) is referred to that work. The grace, the spirit, the arch humour, which give to these "airy nothings" all their charm and importance, must, of necessity, evaporate in the best attempt at a translation.

While these festivities were going forward, the Chevalier de Grammont had every opportunity of paying the most assiduous court to his mistress; and the more difficult he found her of attainment, the stronger became his attachment. Even play, hitherto his ruling passion, could not detain him from Miss Hamilton's side; and his friends began to think the affair grew serious, when Lady Castlemaine's basset-table was forsaken for the Duchess of Ormond's drawing-room. St. Evremond undertook to give him some pertinent advice on the subject, representing the utter improbability of his prevailing with Miss Hamilton, and the utter impossibility of his marrying if he could; and ended by enumerating the suitors whom she had already refused, and whose pretensions were so far above those of an untitled, penniless, younger brother. "My good friend," replied the gay Chevalier, "thou art a philosopher; *tu connais la nature des étoiles du ciel; mais pour les astres de la terre, tu n'y connais rien.* I have just had a lecture from the King, of three hours' length, upon the same score.

What do you tell me of those Ostrogoths, my rivals? Think you, if Miss Hamilton had deigned to listen to them, that I should have cared to obtain her? *Ecoutez, mon ami!* I will marry Miss Hamilton in spite of them and the world; I will have my banishment reversed; she shall be *Dame du Palais* to the Queen of France; my brother will be pleased to die some day or other for our particular gratification. Miss Hamilton shall be mistress of Sémeat* and Countess de Grammont, to make her amends for the loss of that oaf, Norfolk, that sot Richmond, and that rake Falmouth. And what have you to say to this, *mon pauvre philosophe!*"

And so it proved; for Love in this instance was a better prophet than usual. De Grammont obtained the reward which his audacity and perseverance perhaps deserved, and carried off this paragon from all his competitors; but it was no sooner secured, than he seems, with his usual volatility, to have neglected his conquest. It has been said, with little probability, that one circumstance attending this marriage inspired Molière with the first idea of *Le Mariage Forcé.* Louis XIV. having been prevailed on at length to recall De Grammont, after a banishment of six or seven years,† he was in such haste to return to France, that he left London without performing his engagements to Miss Hamilton. Her two

* The château of the De Grammont family.

† De Grammont, with his usual audacity and love of contradiction, had ventured to make himself particularly agreeable to a lady (Mademoiselle de Mothe-Houdancourt) whom his majesty as particularly admired: for this *crime* he was banished.

brothers, Anthony and George Hamilton, pursued him to Dover, and overtaking him at the inn, they exclaimed aloud, "Chevalier de Grammont, n'avez vous rien oublié à Londres?"—"Pardonnez moi, messieurs," replied this ardent lover, "j'ai oublié d'épouser votre sœur." We may suppose that when his high-spirited mistress gave him her hand, she was unacquainted with this characteristic trait.

The Count de Grammont left England finally in 1669, about a year after his marriage. Charles, in a letter to his sister, the unfortunate Duchess of Orleans, dated in October that year, recommends the Countess de Grammont to his sister's friendship. "I writt to you," he says, "yesterday by the Compte de Grammont; but I beleeve this letter will come sooner to your handes, for he goes by Dieppe with his wife and family. And now that I have named her, I cannot chuse but againe desire you to be kind to her; for besides the merritt her family has on both sides, she is as good a creature as ever lived. I beleeve she will passe for a handsome woman in France, though she has not yett, since her lying-in, recovered that good shape she had before, and I am afraid never will."

It appears, from the slight manner in which Charles speaks of the Countess's beauty, that her charms were partly lost upon his gross taste: nor is it surprising that the man whose soul and senses were enslaved by the vulgar and vicious Castlemaine, should be dead to the intellectual graces and refined loveliness of Miss Hamilton.

The Countess de Grammont spent the rest of her life in the French court. Her beauty and elegance charmed the King, yet she did not universally please: Madame de Maintenon thought her "plus agréable qu'aimable," perhaps because, though she could amuse with her lively wit, she would not stoop to flatter. When Madame de Caylus called her "Anglaise insupportable," she probably spoke in the character of a French woman, and a rival wit and beauty.* Madame de Grammont, soon after her arrival in France, was appointed "Dame du Palais" at Versailles; and, in a few years afterwards, De Grammont became, by the death of his elder brother, one of the richest and most powerful of the *noblesse*.

It is pain to think that the man who had sufficient delicacy and discrimination to feel the accomplishments of such a woman as Miss Hamilton, and spirit enough to win and wear her, was so little worthy of his happiness. We look for something far beyond mere superficial talents and graces in him who was the husband of one so peerless. He was gay, gallant, polished in his address, and elegant in his person; his wit ready, pointed, yet perfectly good-humoured: he told a story with inimitable grace—then, as now, a true Parisian accomplishment. He appears to have been a man of the most happy temperament, his vivacity and animal spirits inexhaustible, and his invulnerable self-complacency beyond

* [Madame de Sévigné, in her letters to Madame de Guignan, speaks generally of the Countess of Grammont as of a person by no means agreeable, somewhat affected, and much inclined to give herself haughty airs.—Ed.]

the reach of a serious thought or a profound feeling of any kind. But these are only the garnish and "outward flourishes," which make a character, otherwise estimable, irresistible. Where was the high honour, the chivalrous feeling, the refined sentiments, the nobility of soul, the generous self-devotion, which should have distinguished the husband of Miss Hamilton? Frivolous, worthless, heartless, inconstant, a selfish epicure, a gambler, a sharper, a most malicious enemy, a negligent friend, and a faithless lover:—such was De Grammont, such is the character which Bussy-Rabutin,* and even his partial friend St. Evremond, have left of him, and which he was well content to support in the "Mémoires" which Hamilton wrote from his dictation, and published in his lifetime.† Whether the lovely, noble-minded, and far-

* "Le Chevalier avait les yeux rians, le nez bien fait, la bouche belle, une petite fossette au menton, qui faisait un agréable effet sur son visage; je ne sais quoi de fin dans la physionomie, la taille assez belle s'il ne se fut point vouté, l'esprit galant et délicat. Il écrivait le plus mal du monde.—Quoiqu'il soit superflu de dire qu'un rival soit incommode, le Chevalier l'était au point qu'il eut mieux valu pour une pauvre femme, en avoir quatre sur les bras que lui seul. Il était liberal jusques à la profusion; et par là sa maîtresse ni ses rivaux ne pouvait avoir de valets fidèles. D'ailleurs le meilleur garçon du monde. Une chose qui faisait qu'il lui était plus difficile de persuader qu'à un autre, était qu'il ne parlait jamais serieusement, de sorte qu'il fallait qu'une femme se flattait beaucoup pour croire qu'il fut amoureux d'elle."—*Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules.*

† Before the *Mémoires du Comte de Grammont* were published, they were of course submitted to the censorship. Fontenelle was then Censeur Royal; and he was so scandalized at the idea of a peer of France being represented as a common sharper, or, in polite phrase, "one who used address to correct the errors of Fortune," that he flatly refused his approbation. De Grammont, on hearing this, hastened to wait upon the

superior woman, who had flung away herself upon his unworthiness, afterwards discovered how false was the foundation on which she had built her happiness, we have no means of knowing;—if not, she was more effectually blinded by love than many of her sex who have committed the same irreparable mistake.

They appear to have lived together on easy terms. Towards the latter part of her life, the Countess de Grammont became very devout, and was extremely scandalized by her husband's epicurism and infidelity. De Grammont, who had never known an hour's sickness, used to say he should *never* die. At last, however, in his seventy-fifth year, he fell dangerously ill, and the King (Louis XIV.) sent the Marquis Dangeau to him, to remind him that it was time to think of God. De Grammont listened to him with polite attention, and, turning to his wife, said with a smile, "Comtesse, si vous n'y prenez garde, Dangeau vous escamotera ma conversion!" He recovered from this attack, and seemed more than ever convinced of his own immortality; but paid at

scrupulous censor, and demanded, with his usual vivacity, what business he had to be more solicitous about a nobleman's reputation than he was himself? and desired that he would do him the favour instantly to sign the licence, if the freedom with which his character was treated was the only objection to the work. Fontenelle, as it may be supposed, made no more difficulties. He might have replied to De Grammont, as the latter did to Madame de Hérault. The Count had visited the ladyto pay his compliments of condolence on the death of her husband: she received them with an air of extreme coldness; upon which, suddenly changing his tone, he exclaimed gaily,—" Le prenez-vous par là?—Ma foi, je ne m'en soucie pas plus que vous!"

length the forfeit of humanity, dying in 1707, at the age of eighty-six. From a letter of St. Evremond to Ninon de l'Enclos, it appears that his wife had the satisfaction of converting him at last, and that he died "très dévot."

The countess survived him but a short time: she left two daughters. Claude Charlotte, the eldest, inherited her mother's beauty and her father's wit and vivacity. She married Henry Lord Stafford, and is the same Lady Stafford who was the friend and correspondent of Lady M. W. Montague. The youngest daughter died abbess of a convent in Lorraine.

The portrait annexed is from the picture by Sir Peter Lely, painted for the Duchess of York, and now at Windsor. We are told that, at the time, Lely was enchanted with his subject, and every one considered it as the finest effort of his pencil, both as a painting and a resemblance.* The dignified attitude and elegant turn of the head, are well befitting her who was "grande et gracieuse dans le moindre de ses movemens:" we have here "le petit nez delicat," the fine contour of face, the lovely bust, the open expansive brow, and the lips, ripe, rich, and breathing sweets,—at least to the imagination. A few pearls are negligently interwoven among her luxuriant tresses, as if on purpose to recall Crashaw's beautiful compliment to his mistress:—

* Chaque portrait parut un chef-d'œuvre; et celui de Mademoiselle Hamilton parut le plus achevé. Lely avoua qu'il y avait prit plaisir, &c.

" Tresses that wear
Jewels but to declare
How much themselves more precious are.

Each ruby there,
Or pearl, that dare appear,
Be its own *blush*,—be its own *tear*"

The countenance has infinitely more spirit and intellect than Sir Peter Lely's beauties in general exhibit; and though, perhaps, a little too proud and elevated in its present expression, it must have been, when brightened into smiles, or softened with affection, exquisitely bewitching. The neck and throat are beautifully painted, the drapery is grand and well-disposed, and the background has a rich and deep tone of colour, finely relieving the figure.

There is a slight defect in the drawing of the right arm. Lely did not, like Vandyke, paint his hands and arms from nature: they are in general all alike, pretty and delicate, but destitute of individual character, and often ill drawn. In the present instance this is the more to be regretted, because Miss Hamilton, among her other perfections, was celebrated for the matchless beauty of her hand and arm.

ÉPÎTRE DE ST. EVREMOND À M. LE CHEVALIER DE GRAMMONT,

À l'occasion de son amour pour Mademoiselle Hamilton.

Il n'est qu'un Chevalier au monde!
Et que ceux de la table ronde,
Que les plus fameux aux tournois,
Aux avantures, aux exploits,

Me pardonnent si je les quitte
Pour chanter un nouveau mérite;
C'est celui qu'on vit à la cour,
Jadis si galant sans amour,
Le même qui sût à Bruxelles
Comme ici plaire aux demoiselles;
Gagner tout l'argent des maris,
Et puis revenir à Paris,
Ayant couru toute la terre
Dans le jeu, l'amour, et la guerre.
Insolent en prosperité,
Fort courtois en necessité,
L'ame en fortune liberale,
Aux créanciers pas trop loyale:
Qui n'a changé, ni changera,
Et seul au monde qu'on verra
Soutenir la blanche vieillesse
Comme il a passé la jeunesse;
Rare merveille de nos jours!
N'étaient vos trop longues amours,
N'était la sincère tendresse
Dont vous aimez votre princesse,
N'était qu'ici les beaux désirs
Vous font pousser de vrais soupirs,
Et qu'enfin vous quittez pour elle
Votre mérite d'infidelle—
Cher et parfait original!
Vous n'auriez jamais eu d'égal.
Il est des heros pour la guerre,
Mille grands hommes sur la terre,
Mais au sens de Saint Evremond
Rien qu'un Chevalier de Grammont;
Et jamais ne sera de vie,
Plus admiré et moins suivie!

Painted by Wissing *Engraved by E. Scriven. Historical Engraver to His Majesty.*

Sarah D
Countess of Bridgewater.

London Published by Henry Colburn Great Marlborough Street 1836.

THE COUNTESS OF OSSORY.

" Her person was a paradise, and her soul the cherub to guard it."

DRYDEN.

EMILIE DE NASSAU, Countess of Ossory, was the eldest daughter of Louis de Nassau, Lord of Beverweert, of Odyke, and Auverquerque, in Holland, the acknowledged, but not legitimate, son of Maurice Prince of Orange. He was a man of tried virtue, talents, and courage, and the intimate friend of De Witt.

Lady Ossory is interesting from her extreme beauty, her tenderness, and her feminine virtues. But her alliance with the house of Ormond, which connected her at the same time with all the noblest families of England and Ireland,* and made her the daughter, wife, and mother of heroes, has rendered her something more than

* And more immediately with those of Butler, Hamilton, Stewart, Beaufort, Chesterfield, Devonshire, Derby, Clancarty, and Clanricarde, &c. Lady Ossory's marriage was partly the means of raising others of her family to English alliances and English honours; her youngest sister, Charlotte de Nassau, married the Earl of Arlington, and was mother to the first Duchess of Grafton; her youngest brother, Henry de Nassau d'Auverquerque, was created Earl of Grantham.

merely interesting; has shed around her person and memory that lustre which best becomes a woman,—the lustre reflected from the glory and the virtues of her husband.

The father of the Earl of Ossory was James, the GREAT Duke of Ormond; and never, upon conqueror or potentate, was that epithet more justly bestowed. He was, without exception, the most illustrious character of the times in which he lived; without reproach as a man, a subject, a patriot, and a soldier. He had attached himself, from principle, to the cause of Charles the First; and through the whole of the civil wars had maintained his cause with the most unshaken constancy, and the most generous self-devotion. After having expended his patrimony in the service of that monarch and his successor, and finding that all was lost, except honour, he refused the conditions offered by Cromwell, and, making his escape in a small boat, joined the fortunes of the exiled monarch; and was afterwards in his prosperity, as in his adversity, his ablest counsellor, and truest friend,—never his flatterer, or his favourite.*

The Duchess of Ormond his wife, and the mother of

* As the loyalty of Ormond was that of principle, the favour or displeasure of his capricious master never made the slightest alteration in his demeanour; so that his courteous equanimity sometimes abashed the King. The Duke of Buckingham on one occasion whispered, "I wish your majesty would resolve me one question; whether it be the Duke of Ormond who is out of favour with your majesty, or your majesty with the Duke of Ormond? for you appear the most out of countenance of the two!"

Lord Ossory, was a woman of great beauty, and of an undaunted spirit. She was the heiress of the Earl of Desmond, and her union with the duke, then Lord Thurles, put an end to the feuds and lawsuits which had for years divided the houses of Desmond and Ormond, and threatened the ruin of both. Their marriage, however, was not only a marriage of policy, but of passion; their early attachment was attended by various difficulties and romantic distresses, and in particular by one circumstance, which throws so deep an interest round the character of the duchess, that I venture to relate it.

She was a ward of the King, (Charles I.) who bestowed the guardianship of her person and her vast estates on the Earl of Holland. While the lawsuit was pending between her and Lord Thurles, she happened to meet her young adversary at court, and struck with his noble qualities and fine person, fell in love with him; she was young, inexperienced, and as self-willed as a conscious beauty and a great heiress may be supposed to have been; and took so little care to conceal the partiality she felt, that not only the object of her affection, but the whole court, was aware of it. The King sent to Lord Thurles, desiring that he would desist from any pretensions to the hand of the young lady, as his majesty designed her for another. To this the lover replied, with a spirit which justified the lady's choice, that he should be sorry to displease his majesty, but that he considered he had even a better title than any other nobleman about the court to pay the Lady Elizabeth those attentions which were due to her beauty and merits, being himself

her "poor cousin and kinsman." The Lady Elizabeth, on her part, was not slow to declare her abhorrence of the match proposed by the King, and her determination to marry Lord Thurles, and none other. The union was in all respects the most eligible for both; no other means could be found to put an end to their family dissensions, and Lady Elizabeth strongly felt, and as eloquently pleaded, that reason and interest were on the side of her girlish passion. But the King was resolute; her guardian, according to the fashion of obdurate guardians from time immemorial, placed the young lady in durance vile, and not only those consequences ensued which are *de rigueur* in such cases, but others which certainly were not anticipated by any of the parties concerned.

The young lovers kept up a constant correspondence of letters and tokens, by means of Lady Isabella Rich, the daughter of the Earl of Holland, who not being so strictly secluded as her father's ward, contrived to meet Lord Thurles secretly. Lady Isabella was handsome, lively, good-natured, and attached to Lady Elizabeth, with whom she had been educated; but she was not of an age or a disposition to carry on this clandestine intercourse with safety to herself. In short—not to be too circumstantial—Lady Isabella found her friend's lover only too agreeable; she fell a victim to passion and opportunity, but certainly not to any preconcerted villany on the part of Lord Thurles, who was then only nineteen; the whole tenour of his life, before and after, belies such an imputation. The consequences were,

that Lady Isabella became the mother of an infant, which was immediately sent abroad and carefully educated at Paris, without any knowledge of his parents. The secret was so faithfully kept, that not even a breath of suspicion rested upon Lady Isabella; and soon afterwards, Lord Thurles, by bribing the avarice of Lord Holland,* obtained his consent and his interest with the King, and married Lady Elizabeth.

Several years afterwards, when the duke visited Paris, his first care was to inquire for this son, whom he found a blooming and hopeful youth, accomplished in all the exercises which became his age: the father could not deny himself the pleasure of sending the unhappy mother some tidings of her child; but having occasion to write to his wife the same day, he made a fatal mistake in the direction of the two letters, and that which was intended for Lady Isabella fell into the hands of the Duchess of Ormond.

The duchess passionately loved her husband; and notwithstanding the lapse of years, she must have felt, on this occasion, as a woman would naturally feel on discovering that she had been betrayed in the tenderest point by her lover and her friend. She was still sitting with the letter open in her hand, lost in painful astonishment, when Lady Isabella was announced; an exchange of letters and a mutual explanation took place, and the scene which must have ensued may be imagined. Lady Isabella standing before her injured friend, bowed down

* He bought the earl's consent with 15,000*l.*

to the earth with "penetrative shame," while that generous friend, unable to bear the sight of her humiliation, threw her arms round her neck, and with tears and a thousand fond caresses, endeavoured to reconcile her with herself, assured her of her perfect forgiveness, and promised that the past should be to her as if it had never been.

And she kept her word; for it is even said, and, if true, it is a rare instance of female discretion, that not even the duke ever suspected his wife's knowledge of this transaction.

It happened, after the time of which we speak, that Lady Isabella and her family being obliged to fly from England, the Duchess of Ormond offered her an asylum in her house at Caen; and Lady Isabella, worthy in this instance of such a friend, accepted the offer as frankly as it was made. She resided for two years under the roof of the Duke and Duchess of Ormond, in all honour and confidence. The duchess never condescended to doubt either the truth and love of her husband, or the honour and gratitude of her friend; her domestic peace was never disturbed by petty jealousy, nor her noble confidence wronged by those she had trusted. It is justice to Lady Isabella to add, that she preserved to the end of her life an unblemished reputation, and died unmarried.*

* Her son died young before the Restoration. These particulars, which were not known till after the death of the duke, may be found in Carte's Life of Ormond, vol. iii., folio.

To return to the Earl of Ossory. When the Duke of Ormond withdrew to France, in 1655, he found himself obliged to leave his wife and family behind; and soon afterwards Cromwell caused the Earl of Ossory to be arrested, upon no specific charge, and committed to the Tower.* His mother waited upon the Protector to remonstrate, and to solicit his enlargement, pleading the quiet and inoffensive life which she led with her children in London. Cromwell told her plainly, that he had more reason to fear her than any body else. She replied with dignity and spirit, and in the presence of a numerous drawing-room, that "she desired no favour at his hands, but merely justice to her innocent son;" and that "she thought it strange that she, who had never been concerned in a plot in her life, nor opened her mouth against

* [The Earl of Ossory had, previously to this, been himself residing at the French court. It was there that the excellent and amiable Evelyn became acquainted with him, and their friendship continued until the Earl of Ossory's death, when he took his last farewell of Evelyn as of the "oldest friend" he had. In his Diary, Jan. 13, 1649-50, Evelyn, at Paris, commemorates the "exercises on horseback" of Ossory and his brother Richard; and soon after he relates the following anecdote. "May 7. I went with Sir Richard Browne's lady and my wife, together with the Earle of Chesterfield, Lord Ossorie, and his brother, to Vamber, a place neere the citty famous for butter; when coming homewards, being on foote, a quarrel arose between Lord Ossorie and a man in a garden, who thrust Lord Ossorie from the gate with uncivil language; on which our young gallant struck the fellow on the pate, and bid him aske pardon, which he did with much submission, and so we parted: but we were not gon far, before we heard a noise behind us, and saw people coming with gunns, swords, staves, and forks, and who followed flinging stones; on which we turn'd and were forc'd to engage, and with our swords, stones, and the help of our servants, (one of whom had a pistol,) made our retreate for neare a quarter of a mile, when we took shelter in

his person and government, should be represented as so terrible a person."—"No, madam," replied Cromwell, "that is not the case; but your worth has gained you so great an influence over all the commanders of our party, and we know so well your power over your own party, that it is in your ladyship's breast to act what you please." She answered, "that she must needs construe this speech into a civil compliment;" but a compliment and a shrug were all she could get from the politic Protector, till Ossory fell dangerously ill. She then solicited for him with such vehemence, that Cromwell at length set him at liberty; and the earl, attended by his brother, Lord Richard, disguised as his servant, escaped to the Hague He was received there with high honour by his father's friends, and in particular by M. de Beverweert, who enter-

a house where we were besieg'd, and at length forc'd to submit to be prisoners. Lord Hatton, with some others, were taken prisoners in the flight, and his lordship was confin'd under three locks and as many doores in this rude fellow's master's house, who pretended to be steward to Monsr. St. Germain, one of the presidents of the Grand Chambre du Parliament, and a canon of Nôtre Dame. Severall of us were much hurt. One of our lacquies escaping to Paris, caused the bailiff of St. Germain to come with his guard and rescue us. Immediately afterwards came Monsr. St. Germain himselfe in greate wrath, on hearing that his housekeeper was assaulted; but when he saw the king's officers, the gentlemen and noblemen, with his majesty's resident, and understood the occasion, he was ashamed of the accident, requesting the fellow's pardon, and desiring the ladys to accept their submission and a supper at his house." "I have often heard that gallant gentleman my Lord Ossorie affirme solemnly, that in all the conflicts he ever was in, at sea or on land, (in the most desperate of both which he had often been,) he believ'd he was never in so much danger as when these people rose against us. He us'd to call it the *battaill de Vambre*, and remember it with a greate deale of mirth as an adventure *en cavalier*."—Ed.]

tained the English royalists with great hospitality. In her father's house, Lord Ossory had frequent and almost daily opportunities of seeing and conversing with the Lady Emilie: the more he saw and knew of her, the more he admired, and at length loved, with all the enthusiasm of his character; and he assured his father that "the happiness of his life depended on passing it with her."

At this time the Earl of Ossory was about four-and-twenty; he was tall, well-made, and handsome, with an open expressive countenance, and fine teeth and hair; he rode, fenced, and danced remarkably well; played on the lute and the guitar; spoke French eloquently, and Italian fluently; was a good historian; and seems to have had a taste for light and elegant literature; for Sir Robert Southwell represents him as so well read in poetry and romance, that "in a gallery full of pictures and hangings, he could tell the stories of all that were there described." These, however, were the mere superficial graces which enabled him to please in a drawing-room; and to these he added all the rare and noble qualities which can distinguish a man in the cabinet and in the field. He was wise in counsel, quick and decided in action, as brave in battle as an Amadis of Gaul,—gallant "beyond the fiction of romance," humane, courteous, affable, temperate, generous to profusion, and open almost to a fault. "In a word," says the historian, "his virtue was unspotted in the centre of a luxurious court; his integrity unblemished amid all the vices of the times; his honour untainted through the course of his whole

life;" and it is most worthy of remark, that in those days, when the spirits of men were heated with party rage, when profligate pens were wielded by profligate and obscure individuals, and satire "unbated and envenomed," was levelled at whatever was noble, or beautiful, or good in the land, not a single expression can any where be traced to contradict or invalidate this universal testimony. "No writer," (I quote again from history,) "ever appeared, then or since, so regardless of truth and of his own character, as to venture one stroke of censure on that of the Earl of Ossory."*

Such a man might have pretended to the hand of any woman upon earth; and no woman—though she had been a throned and sceptred queen, in beauties, virtues, graces, friends, exceeding all account, and dowered with kingdoms, but would have been honoured in his choice. If, therefore, some difficulties attended his marriage, it will easily be believed that they arose not on the part of the lady of his love.

The Duke of Ormond had commenced a treaty of marriage for his son with a daughter of Lord Southampton,† which he broke off with regret, for her portion was

* Kippis' Biog. Brit. vol. iii., p. 84; Collins; Carte's Life of Ormond, vol. iii.; and Sir Robert Southwell's Ireland.

† Afterwards Lady Russel,—the Lady Russel, whose very name sanctifies the paper upon which it is written. It is, however, no imputation upon Lord Ossory's taste that he preferred the lady he knew and loved to the lady he had never seen, and whose character had not yet been developed by those trials, out of which she arose an angel upon earth.

double that of the Lady Emilie: and fortune was at this time an object in the Ormond family, reduced as they were by exile, confiscation, and losses of every kind. M. de Beverweert would give his daughter no more than £10,000; and he insisted on his future son-in-law being put into immediate possession of £1200 a-year; a large income in those days, but which would have been a mere trifle when the family were in power and prosperity. The Duchess of Ormond was put to great difficulties, the condition of her estate in Ireland scarce allowing her to part with so large a portion of it, "but she could deny nothing to her beloved son."* The duke, who looked upon this alliance as a means of strengthening his interest with De Witt, gave his consent, and the marriage was celebrated at the Hague, November 17, 1659. The following year, the King's restoration took place, and Ossory brought his young and beautiful bride in triumph to England.

It does not appear that Lady Ossory was remarkable for her wit; but she had excellent sense, an affectionate heart, and the sweetest temper in nature.† Her husband might have said of her, as Shakspeare so beautifully says of his mistress:

> "Fair, kind, and true is all my argument;
> Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,
> Still constant in a wondrous excellence."‡

The power she obtained and preserved in her hus-

* Verbatim from Carte, vol. iii. † Carte, vol. iii.

‡ Sonnet 105.

band's noble heart, is no slight argument of her superior understanding; in that age of universal gallantry, Lord Ossory *dared* to be faithful to his wife; and there lived not the man who would have dared to banter him upon the subject. The only fashionable folly he was known to indulge in, was gaming; he sometimes played high,—an imprudence into which his habits, as a courtier, necessarily led him. After having lost deeply, he would return home, thoughtful and moody; and when his wife tenderly inquired the cause, and he would tell her that he was "vexed with himself for playing the fool, and gaming, and had lost, perhaps, a thousand pounds;" she would still desire him "not to be troubled, for she would find means to save it at home."—"She was, indeed," adds the grave historian of the family, "an admirable economist, always cheerful, and never known to be out of humour; so that they lived together in the most perfect harmony imaginable. Lord Ossory never found any place or company more agreeable than he found at home; and when he returned thither from court, they constantly met with open arms, with kind embraces, and the most moving expressions of mutual tenderness."*

But this picture, bright and beautiful as it is, had its shades. In this world of ours, "where but to think, is to be full of sorrow," Lady Ossory was so far most happy, that, though she suffered *through* those she loved, (as all must do who embark their happiness in their affections,) she never suffered *by* them: but she lost several of her

* Carte's Life of Ormond, vol. iii.

numerous family at an early age, and the frequent absence of Lord Ossory, whilst engaged in the highest civil and military employments, must have doomed her to many widowed hours. The reckless valour, too, with which he exposed his life, and which was such as even to call down a rebuke from his brave father, must have filled the gentle bosom of his wife with a thousand fond anxieties: yet might not those partings and meetings, those alternations of hope and fear, those trembling terrors for his safety, those rapturous tears which greeted his return, have assisted to keep freshly alive, through a long series of years, all the romance of early passion? And was not this much? Did Lady Ossory buy too dearly the proud happiness of belonging to that man, upon whom the eyes of all Europe were fixed to gaze and to admire? who from every new triumph brought her home a faith and love unchanged,—depositing his honours at her feet, and his cares in her gentle arms? Let the woman who reads this question, answer it to her own heart.

An idea may be formed of Lady Ossory's life and feelings, by a rapid glance over her husband's brilliant career. He was twice Lord-Deputy in Ireland; twice an ambassador: there was no considerable action fought by sea or land, during the reign of Charles II., in which he did not distinguish himself: he was at the same time a general in the army, and rear-admiral of the Red; and in 1673, he hoisted the Union flag as Commander-in-Chief of the whole fleet, in the absence of Prince Rupert. During the Dutch war, the principle and policy

of which he entirely disapproved,* he nevertheless served with heroic valour, if not with enthusiasm; and he would have destroyed the whole fleet of Holland, if the timidity of the King's council had not defeated his scheme.† He was Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, a knight of the Garter, and a privy counsellor, lord of the King's bedchamber, and lord-chamberlain to the Queen. He lived, when in London, with such munificent hospitality, that it must have required all Lady Ossory's skill, as an economist, to manage their household. He was remarkable for seeking out all the foreigners of any distinction or merit who visited England, and was fond of entertaining them at his table.‡ To this, perhaps, he partly owed

* See his famous speech in defence of his father against Lord Shaftesbury. [Evelyn has this entry in his Diary, 12th March, 1671-2:—"Now was the first blow given by us to the Dutch convoy of the Smyrna fleete, by Sir Robert Holmes and Lord Ossorie, in which we received little save blows, and a worthy reproch for attacking our neighbours 'ere any war was proclaim'd, and then pretending the occasion to be, that some time before, the Merlin yacht chanceing to saile thro' the whole Dutch fleete, their admiral did not strike to that trifling vessel. Surely this was a quarrel slenderly grounded, and not becoming Christian neighbours. We are like to thrive accordingly. Lord Ossorie several times deplor'd to me his being engaged in it; he had more justice and honour than in the least to approve of it, tho' he had ben over persuaded to the expedition."—Ed.]

† It is not now understood why this plan, which was allowed to be simple and feasible, though requiring great courage to execute, was not acceded to; when some of the council objected, Ossory told the King, "that he would blow up the whole Dutch fleet with a farthing candle, or have his head set upon Westminster Hall beside Cromwell's."

‡ Dryden describes the house of Ormond as one "open as that of Publicola, where all were equally admitted, where nothing that was reasonable was denied, where misfortune was a powerful recommendation, and where want itself was a powerful mediator, and stood next to merit."

his widely extended reputation on the Continent. When he was Envoy-Extraordinary in France, in 1667, Louis XIV. endeavoured to prevail upon him to enter into his service. He offered him personally, and through his ministers, the most magnificent appointments; and when these were refused, he was desired only to name what would content him for himself and his friends. Finding all in vain, the King, at his departure, loaded him with favours, and presented him with a jewel worth 2000*l.*

It was not alone the dangers of battle that Lady Ossory had to fear for her husband; his chivalrous honour and the vehemence of his character sometimes perilled his life in more private encounters. His memorable quarrel with the Duke of Buckingham is well known. The duke had asserted in the House of Lords, that "whoever opposed the Bill then under discussion," (the Irish Cattle Bill,) "had either an Irish interest, or an Irish understanding." Ossory called on the duke to retract his words, which he considered as an insolent reflection on his country, or meet him with his sword in his hand to maintain them. The whole affair, in which Ossory behaved with so much frankness and gallantry, and in which the duke cut such a pitiful, or rather such an infamous figure, may be found at length in Clarendon.

In 1671, occurred that extraordinary attempt on the life of the Duke of Ormond by the ruffian Blood, of notorious memory; it is supposed at the instigation of Buckingham. There was, in fact, something so audacious and so theatrical in the idea of hanging the duke

upon the gallows at Tyburn, that it could only have originated with that "fanfaron de crimes." Such, at least, was the general opinion at the time. A few days after this event, Lord Ossory meeting the Duke of Buckingham in the King's chamber, the colour flushed to his temples with passion, and his eyes sparkled with such ire, that the duke took refuge behind the King's chair. "My lord," said Ossory, stepping up to him, "I know well that you are at the bottom of this late attempt of Blood's upon my father; and therefore I give you fair warning, if my father comes to a violent end by sword or pistol,—if he dies by the hand of a ruffian, or the more secret way of poison, I shall not be at a loss to know the first author of it. I shall consider *you* as the assassin; I shall treat you as such, and I shall pistol you, though you stood beside the King's chair; and I tell it you in his majesty's presence, that you may be sure I shall keep my word." So saying, he turned upon his heel, leaving the duke so completely overawed, that he had not even spirit to utter a denial.*

* I believe no writer has remarked the singular coincidence between the characters and fortunes of the Duke of Ormond, and his ancestor, the Earl of Ormond, of Elizabeth's time. Both were brave, popular, enthusiastically loyal, and inflexibly honest; both were accomplished courtiers, and lived to experience the ingratitude and injustice of the princes they had served; both experienced many changes of fortune, and lived to an extreme old age, so as to behold their heirs in the third generation; both were opposed to the reigning favourites, for the enmity of the Duke of Ormond and Buckingham was at least equal to that of the Earl of Ormond and Lord Leicester. As Buckingham was believed to have instigated Blood in his attempt on the Duke of Ormond, so Leicester was known to have attempted the assassination of Ormond by means of a hired cut-throat,

But it is time to stop; the imagination lingers over the subject, unwilling to approach the catastrophe. To complete the glorious picture, such a spirit should have passed away from the earth as unstained by grief as by fear—unembittered, unbroken to the last; and it was far otherwise. In 1680, the earl, leaving Lady Ossory at the seat of her daughter, Lady Derby, came to London to prepare for his departure on a new expedition. He had been appointed governor of Tangier, but with forces so inadequate that he considered himself cast away, "not only on a hazardous adventure, but an impossibility."* "This," says Evelyn, "touched my lord deeply, that he should be so little consider'd as to put him on a businesse in which he should probably not only lose his reputation, but be charged with all the miscarriages and ill-successe. My lord being an exceeding brave and valiant person, and who had so approved himself in divers signal batailes, both at sea and land; so beloved and so esteem'd by the people, as one they depended upon in all occasions worthy of such a cap-

who was afterwards, like Blood, forgiven and rewarded. The following anecdote is very characteristic:—The Earl of Ormond coming one day to court, met Lord Leicester in the ante-chamber. After the usual salutations, "My lord," said Leicester, insolently; "I dreamed of you last night!"—"Indeed," replied Ormond, "what could your lordship dream of me?"—"I dreamed that I gave you a box on the ear."—"Dreams are interpreted by contraries," replied the high-spirited Irishman, and instantly lent him a cuff on the ear, which made the favourite stagger. For this he was committed to the Tower by Elizabeth.

* Lord Sunderland said in council, that "Tangier must necessarily be lost; but that it was fit Lord Ossory should be sent, that they might give some account of it to the world."—*Evelyn's Memoirs.*

tain; he looked on this as too great an indifference in his majesty, after all his services and the merits of his father, the Duke of Ormond, and a designe of some who envied his virtue. It certainly took so deep roote in his mind, that he who was the most void of feare in the world, (and assur'd me he would go to Tangier with ten men, if his majesty commanded him,) could not beare up against this unkindness."

The extreme heat of the weather, the fatigue he underwent in making his preparations, and the deep sense of the injury he had received, which seems to have struck upon his heart, threw him into a delirious fever: the last coherent words he spoke, were to name his wife, and recommend her and her children to his father's care.* He died at the house of his brother-in-law, Lord Arlington, four days afterwards, in his forty-sixth year: leaving behind him a character which poetry cannot embellish, nor flattery exaggerate. Even the muse of Dryden cowered when he approached the theme: after reading the life of Lord Ossory in plain and not very elegant prose, his poetical panegyric appears cold and strained.† The reply of the Duke of

* "My son's kindness to his wife, and his care of her, increases my value for him, and my sorrow for him, and I am glad he expressed it so frequently, when he thought of that sad hour which is come upon us; but there was no other need of it than the manifestation of his good-nature, for I am ready to do for her, whatever she or her friends can wish."—Letter of the Duke of Ormond to Lord Arlington.

† Dryden was a practised hand at an elegy and a panegyric, and in the present instance he was more in earnest than usual; but turn from his tuneful couplets to the simple entry which Evelyn has made in his

Ormond to some impertinent comforter is well known, and is the most comprehensive and affecting eulogy ever pronounced :—"I would not exchange my dead son for any living son in Christendom!"*

Lord Ossory died before his unhappy wife could even hear of his illness. She did not, upon her bereavement, break out into any tumultuous sorrow; she bowed her head to the stroke with apparent resignation, and never raised it again. She survived her husband little more than three years, and dying in January, 1684, was buried in Christ Church.

The Countess of Ossory was the mother of twelve children, of whom, two sons and three daughters survived her.

Diary, of the "death of his noble and illustrious friend, the Lord Ossorie."—"His majesty never lost a worthier subject, nor father a better or more dutiful son; a loving, generous, good-natured, and perfectly obliging friend; one who had done innumerable kindnesses to several before they knew it, nor did he ever advance any that were not worthy: no one more brave, more modest; none more humble, sober, and every way virtuous. Unhappy England in this illustrious person's loss! Universal was the mourning for him, and the eulogies on him: I staid night and day by his bed side to his last gasp, to close his dear eyes! O sad father, mother, wife, and children! What shall I add? he deserved all that a sincere friend, a brave soldier, a virtuous courtier, a loyal subject, an honest man, a bountiful master, and a good Christian could deserve of his prince and country."—*Evelyn's Memoirs*, vol. i., p. 490.

* In the private desk of the duke was found a Prayer upon the occasion of his son's death, in which the old man implores that "this dispensation might melt, not break his heart."

Her eldest son, James, succeeded his grandfather as Duke of Ormond, in 1688. He inherited the virtues, talents, and splendid fortunes of his princely race. He was twice Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which he governed with more affection from the people, and kept his court in greater splendour than ever was known in that kingdom. He was twice Captain-General and Commander-in-Chief of the land forces of Great Britain, a knight of the Garter, and Lord-Constable of England at the coronation of William the Third. But in 1715, he was impeached in the House of Commons by a factious party; and in a moment of pique and disdain he refused to wait his trial, retired to France, and joined the party of the Pretender: he was of course attainted, his estate declared forfeit, and his honours extinguished. Having thus rashly decided, he did not, like his friend Bolingbroke, restore himself to favour by betraying the cause he had embraced: he died at Avignon, (where he had for some time subsisted on a pension from the King of Spain,) leaving no issue. To this Duke of Ormond, Dryden has dedicated his *Fables;* and to his duchess, (a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort,) is addressed the beautiful introduction to the Tale of *Palamon and Arcite.*

Lady Ossory's second son, Lord Charles Butler, was created Earl of Arran on the death of his uncle Richard. He married a daughter of Lord Crewe, and dying in 1758, the title became extinct: he was the last male representative of this branch of the family.

Of the three daughters, the eldest, Lady Elizabeth, married William ninth Earl of Derby. Lady Emelia died unmarried, at the age of one hundred, having lived through six reigns; and Lady Henrietta was united to her cousin, Henry de Nassau, Earl of Grantham.

The portrait, never before engraved, is after the picture by Wissing, in the Beauty-room at Windsor; the dress is a crimson boddice, not very becoming, with a veil shading the hair; the arms and hands are ill drawn, but the face is beautiful, the features small and delicate, with just that charming expression of modesty and innocence, which the fancy would love to ascribe to the wife of Ossory.

[The following letter was written by the Duke of Ormond to the Countess of Clancarty, on Lord Ossory's death.

"KILKENNY, AUG. 11, 1680.

"Since I may claim a part in your letter to my wife, having so great a share in the sad subject of it; and since she is not in composure enough to write herself, she desires you would receive from me her and my thanks for the consolation you intend us, and which really your pious reflections and advices do afford. I confess we have need of all the assistances of reason and religion to support us; for though there be nothing in this life more natural or more visible than the frailty of it, and that we know whoever comes into this world

must, a little sooner or a little later, as certainly go out of it, and that a grave is as sure a receptacle as the womb; yet either too much value of ourselves, or rather too little regard to the God of life and death, makes us bear afflictions of this kind, when they come home to ourselves, with less submission and resignation than we ought. You have, like us, lost an eldest son, dear to you, and valuable in the world; and we were in the same degree of relation to yours, that you were to ours. That God that gave you strength and patience, and an holy acquiescence, continue his comforts to you, and confer them on us."

The Queen, on this truly melancholy occasion, wrote with her own hand the following letter to the duke.

Indorsed, "Received 3rd September, 1681."

"My Lord Duke of Ormond.

"I do not think any thing I can say will lessen your trouble for the death of my Lord Ossory, who is so great a loss to the King and the publicke, as well as to my own particular service, that I know not how to express it; but every day will teach me, by shewing me the want I shall find of so true a friend. But I must have so much pity upon you, as to say but little on so sad a subject; conjuring you to believe that I am,

My Lord Duke of Ormond,

Your very affectionate friend,

CATHERINA REGINA."

The following brief character of Lady Ossory's two sons, and of her son-in-law, are taken from Spring Macky's Memoirs, 1733, 8vo., p. 10.

"JAMES, DUKE OF ORMOND. — On Queen Anne's accession to the throne, he had the command given him of the expedition to Cadiz; which miscarried, not by his fault, as it appeared plainly in the examination of that affair in the House of Peers; and he had the good luck in his return to burn the French fleet at Vigo, and to assist at the solemn *Te Deum*, sung by the Queen at St. Paul's for that expedition; when it appeared how much he was the darling of the people, who neglected their sovereign, and applauded him more, perhaps, than ever any subject was on any occasion. He was sent soon after Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, where he governed with more affection from the people, and his court was in greater splendor, than ever was known in that kingdom.

"He certainly was one of the most brave, generous, princely men that ever was, but good-natured to a fault; loved glory, and consequently was crowded with flatterers: never knew how to refuse any body, which was the reason why he obtained so little from King William, asking for every body. He had all the qualities of a great man, except that one of a statesman, hating business; loved, and was beloved by the ladies; of a low stature, but well shaped; a good mien and address; a fair complexion, and very beautiful face."

Dean Swift, in his Manuscript Notes, observes of the foregoing, that it is "fairly enough writ."

"LORD BUTLER OF WESTON.—Is Earl of Arran in Ireland, and brother to the Duke of Ormond: he commanded a troop of Horse-Guards; was gentleman of the bed-chamber to King William; of very good sense, though he seldom shewed it; of a fair complexion, middle stature."

Dean Swift observes on this paragraph: "This is right, but he is the most negligent of his own affairs."

"HENRY D'AUVERQUERQUE, EARL OF GRANTHAM.—He married the Duke of Ormond's sister; he is a very pretty gentleman, and fair complexioned."

"A good for nothing," saith Dean Swift.—ED.]

Painted by Sir Peter Lely. Engraved by T. Wright.

Elizabeth
Lady Denham

LADY DENHAM.

"For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds—
Lilies that fester, smell far worse than weeds!"

SHAKSPEARE.

THIS beautiful woman is interesting from the poetical fame of her husband, and her own tragical and mysterious fate; but she presents, in all respects, a lamentable contrast to the gentle and blameless Lady Ossory.

Lady Denham was the eldest of two sisters, daughters of Sir William Brooke, K.B., and nieces of Digby, Earl of Bristol.* Both were beautiful and lively; or, as De Grammont expresses it, "*faites pour donner de l'amour, et pour en prendre;*" and their profligate uncle, who was at this time intriguing against the influence of Lady Castlemaine, introduced them at court, in the hope that one or both would captivate the heart of the versatile Charles. How far these young girls, and both were then very young, lent themselves to this project, or were acquainted with his purposes, is not clear: but Lady Castlemaine interfered in good time to prevent the

* Frances Brooke, the younger sister of Lady Denham, married Sir Thomas Whitmore, K.B., ancestor of the Whitmores of Shropshire.

accomplishment of the earl's hopes; and the King, who had just purchased a peace at the usual hard price, was not inclined to endanger it for the sake of Miss Brooke. She next attracted the notice of the Duke of York; but in the midst of this flirtation, she was married by the interposition of her friends, at the age of eighteen, to Sir John Denham,* then a widower, and old enough to be her father, or her grandfather; and who seemed determined to avenge, in his own person, all the satirical tirades and the poignant ridicule with which he had formerly visited faithless wives and betrayed husbands. Denham had led a dissipated life, and his age was neither pleasing nor respectable: although hardly more than fifty, he is described, at the period of his marriage, as "ancient and limping,"† and was ill calculated either to captivate or to rule a young and wilful beauty. This disproportioned union covered him with ridicule: his beautiful wife became at once the object of open assiduities, and himself almost frantic with jealousy. The

* Sir John Denham was born in Dublin, (where his father held the high office of Chief Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland,) in 1615. He attached himself devotedly to the royal cause, and was on the Restoration knighted, and appointed Surveyor of the Buildings to the King,—Sir Christopher Wren as his deputy. This was the more necessary, as, according to Evelyn, Sir John was a better poet than an architect. A great part of the family estates, situated at Egham and its neighbourhood, were wasted by Denham at the gaming-table; the rest were confiscated during the civil wars. His reputation as a poet rests upon his "Cooper's Hill." Sir John left three children by his first wife, who was a Miss Cotton.

† Aubrey's Letters. De Grammont says he was seventy-nine when he married Miss Brooke; he probably looked much older than he really was.

Duke of York, who had rather neglected Miss Brooke before her marriage, renewed his attentions. The lady was not disposed to be absolutely cruel, but she was in disposition haughty, and inclined to coquetry; she gave herself airs accordingly, and the duke, who was the most stupid and ungainly of lovers, contrived to render himself, on the present occasion, supereminently ridiculous: Pepys describes him as following her up and down the presence-chamber, "like a dog." It is consistent with the character of James and his family, historically branded with the reproach of systematic ingratitude, that no remorseful or generous feeling seems to have restrained him in this pursuit, although he was under particular personal obligations to Denham, which nothing could cancel: during the civil wars, when the prince was a mere boy, and in imminent danger of his liberty, or his life, Denham had conveyed him out of England at his own personal risk, and placed him in the hands of the Queen at Paris. As for Lady Denham, she had declared, with an effrontery worthy of the education she had received in the house of her uncle, that she would not be a "mistress to go up and down the privy stairs, but would be owned publicly;" and the duke accordingly visited her publicly and in state, attended by all the gentlemen of his household.

This, however, was not enough to satisfy our perverse and arrogant beauty. Brounker, whose name is handed down to us as the most famous chess-player of his time, filled in the household of the duke the same honourable office which Tom Chiffinch held in that of the King, his

brother; and he made himself extremely useful in this negotiation. Lady Castlemaine, who had lost the power of blushing for any thing, did not blush to be his coadjutor. Thus surrounded by tempters, and the worst of tempters, those of her own sex, Lady Denham was determined, that since the fates had decreed her fall, it should at least be surrounded with all possible éclat.

The place of lady of the bedchamber to the Duchess of York being vacant, Lady Denham demanded it of the duke: the duke had the assurance to insist that it should be given to her. The duchess, though in general submissive to his will, and accustomed to his infidelities, resisted on this occasion, well knowing that the high spirit and uncommon talents of Lady Denham exposed her to the chance of playing a very secondary personage in her own court: she had the example of Queen Catherine before her as a warning; and the duke had that of his brother as an encouragement, and he was equally peremptory. Every where Sir John Denham was beset by malicious congratulations on his wife's elevation, so that he would have hung himself in despite and despair, but that he had too much wit and too little courage.

The matter was still in discussion, when Lady Denham was seized with a sudden indisposition, of which, after languishing some days, she expired, January 7th, 1667, in the full bloom of her youth and beauty, and before she had completed her twenty-first year. It was believed at the time that she had been poisoned in a cup of cho-

colate,* and her death was so sudden, it took place so critically, and was accompanied by such agonizing symptoms, that there was some ground for the belief: Lady Denham herself ceased not to aver, with tears, that she had been poisoned. Her husband was so strongly suspected, that for some days afterwards his house in Scotland-Yard was surrounded by an enraged populace, who threatened to stone him on his appearance. Others did not scruple to accuse the Duchess of York of being privy to this horrible affair, and an infamous libel to that effect was posted on her door; but there is not the slightest ground for believing in the accusation. Sir John Den-

* Aubrey, who lived at the time, asserts the fact without any circumlocution. Pepys says that the universal belief was, that Lady Denham was poisoned, and that the physicians would assemble the day after her death, to examine into the symptoms and causes of her decease; which examination never took place.

[We think that the very entries of Pepys are sufficient to show the improbability of her death by poison. On the 10th November, 1666, "I hear that my Lady Denham is exceedingly sick, even to death, and that she says, and every body else discourses, that she is poisoned; and Creed tells me, that it is said that there hath been a design to poison the King." On the 12th, "Creed tells me of my Lady Denham, whom every body says is poisoned, and she hath said it to the Duke of York; but is upon the mending hand, though the town says she is dead this morning." The poisoning story is here connected with a rumoured attempt on the King, and it is evident, as was then the case on every such rumour, the town was full of different reports about it. We hear nothing more of her in Pepys till the second of the following January, when she died, so that her death was by no means "sudden," or her illness very short: "Lord Brouncker tells me that my Lady Denham is at last dead. Some suspect her poisoned, but it will be best known when her body is opened to-day, she dying yesterday morning." It may also be remarked that, in Pepys, in the space of less than two months, 'every body's discourses' are reduced to the suspicion of some.—Ed.]

ham is not so easily acquitted; it is remarkable that he became insane immediately after his wife's death, and continued so for several months.* This insanity might, however, have been caused by terror, or by indignation and grief, and not by remorse, as it was insinuated. The matter was at the time hushed up with all convenient speed, and the horrible fate by which this unhappy woman expiated her errors remains a mystery.

Sir John Denham died in 1668, about a year after his wife; he had completely recovered from his insanity some months before his death; and, in the interval, wrote his poem on the death of Cowley.

Except the portraits of Miss Hamilton and Lady Bellasys, there is not one among the Beauties at Windsor that can be compared to this picture of Lady Denham, either for delicacy of execution, or splendour of colouring. She is represented seated on a bank, with flowers in her lap, dressed in rich amber-coloured satin: the neck, bosom, hands, and arms, are beautiful; the face is not generally considered as attractive, yet the features, which are too large and striking for a delicate beauty, have a singular expression which rivets the attention,—blending capacity, pride, and the capability of strong passions. Her complexion is fair, but glowing and fresh like a full-blown flower: her hair of a lovely brown. The

* In justice to Denham it should be observed, that Butler, in his bitter and outrageous satire, entitled "Verses on the Recovery of Sir John Denham from his late Madness," makes no allusion to the death of Lady Denham.

whole disposition of the picture, and the magnificent colouring of the drapery and the background, have never been surpassed by Lely, even in his most celebrated works. It is now engraved for the first time.

[The curious sketch of the Life of Sir John Denham, given by the antiquarian Aubrey in his entertaining Letters and Lives of Eminent Persons, seems to us by no means an improper supplement to the life of his lady. Aubrey was a great collector of gossiping stories, which, from their nature, are not absolutely to be depended upon.

"I have heard Mr. James Howe say, that he was the dreamingest young fellow; he never expected such things from him as he hath left the world. When he was there, he would game extremely; when he had played away all his money, he would play away his father's cappes wrought with gold. His father was Sir John Denham, one of the Barons of the Exchequer; he had been one of the Lords Justices in Ireland: he married Ellenor,* one of the daughters of Sir Garret Moore, knight, Lord Baron of Mellifont, in y^e^ kingdome of Ireland, whom he married during his service in Ireland, in y^e^ place of Chief Justice there.

"Sir John was not supposed to be a witt. At last, viz.

* She was a beautiful woman, as appears by her monument. Sir John, they say, did much resemble his father.

1640, his play of "*The Sophy*" came out, which did take extremely. Mr. Edmund Waller sayd then of him, that he broke out like the Irish Rebellion,—threescore thousand strong, when nobody suspected it. He was much rooked by gamesters, and fell acquainted with that unsanctified crew to his ruine. His father had some suspicion of it, and chid him severely; whereupon his son John (only child) wrot a little Essay in 8vo, pointed *against gaming*, and to shew the vanities and inconveniences of it, which he presented to his father, to let him know his detestation of it: but shortly after his father's death (1638,) (who left 2000 or 1500 lib. in ready money, two houses well furnished, and much plate,) the money was played away first, and next the plate was sold. *I* remember, about 1646, he lost 200 lib. one night at Newcutt. * * * * *

"In 1646-7 he conveyed or stole away the two Dukes of Yorke and Glocester from St. James's, (from the tuition of the Earle of Northumberland,) and conveyed them into France to the Prince of Wales and Queen-mother. It was at Wilton, the seat of the Earl of Pembroke, in 1652, that he translated the —— book of Virgil's *Æneis*, and also burlesqu't it.* He married for his first wife the daughter and heire of —— Cotton, of Glocestershire, by whom he had 500 lib. per annum, one son and two daughters.

* "He burlesqued Virgil, and burnt it, saying, that 'twas not fitt that the first poet should be so abused." From Mr. Chr. Ware, tutor to William Lord Herbert.

"He was much beloved by King Charles the First, who much valued him for his integrity. He granted him the reversion of the Surveyor of his Buildings, after the decease of Mr. Inigo Jones; which place, after the restoration of King Charles II., he enjoyed to his death, and gott seaven thousand pounds, as Sir Christopher Wren told me of, to his owne knowledge. Sir Christopher Wren was his deputy.

"An. Dom. 166– he married his second wife, — Brooke, a very beautiful young lady; Sir John was ancient and limping.

"The Duke of Yorke fell deeply in love with her. This occasioned Sir John's distemper of madnesse in 166–, which first appeared when he went from London to see the famous free-stone quarries at Portland, in Dorset. When he came within a mile of it, turned back to London againe, and would not see it. He went to Hounslowe, and demanded rents of lands he had sold many yeares before; went to the King, and told him he was the Holy Ghost; but it pleased God that he was cured of this distemper, and wrott excellent verses, particularly on the death of Abraham Cowley, afterwards. His second lady had no child, and was poysoned by the hands of the Co. of Roc. with chocolatte. At the coronation of King Charles II. he was made knight of the Bath.

"He died in 1668-9, March the 23rd; was buried in Westminster Abbey, near S^r. Jeffery Chaucer's monument.

"He delighted much in bowles, and did bowle very well. He was of the tallest, but a little uncurvetting at his shoulders, not very robust. His haire was but thin and flaxen, with a moist curle. His gate was slow, and was rather a stalking, (he had long legges). His eie was a kind of light goose gray, not big; but it had a strange piercingness, not as to shining and glory, but (like a Momus) when he conversed with you, he look't into your very thoughts.

"In the time of the civill warres, Geo. Withers, the poet, begged S^r^ Jo. Denham's estate of the Parliament, in whose cause he was a captaine of horse. It (happened) that G. W. was taken prisoner, and was in danger of his life, having written severely against the King. S^r^ John Denham went to the King, and desired his ma^tie^ not to hang him; for that whilest G. W. lived, he should not be the worst poet in England. Sir John was satyricall when he had a mind to it."—Ed.]

NELL GWYNN.

"How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like the canker in a fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
Oh, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making licentious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise:
Naming *thy* name, blesses an ill report.
Oh, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee!
Where Beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turn to fair that eyes can see!"

SHAKSPEARE. *Sonnet* 95.

NELL GWYNN, — pretty, witty, merry, open-hearted Nelly,—has much more than her own frailties to answer for; and they (alas, that we must needs say it!) are enough, in all conscience. Her very virtues have proved mischievous, inasmuch as they have given occasion to certain scoffers to blaspheme "the sun-clad power of chastity." Wicked arguers against that law of society which comprises all female virtues in one, have set up the name of Nell Gwynn as a rallying point; and under that name, with all its gay associations of wreathed smiles, arch sayings, sweet looks, kind feelings, and bene-

volent deeds, they fight their battles, without considering that she, and one or two others, are but exceptions to a general rule, harsh in particular applications, but on the whole, just and friendly to our sex.

It is, at least in *one* sense, rather a delicate point to touch on the life of Nell Gwynn: one would fain be properly shocked, decorously grave, and becomingly moral; but, as the lady says in *Comus*, "to what end?" It were rather superfluous to set about proving that Nell Gwynn was, in her day, a good-for-nothing sort of person; in short, as wild a piece of frailty as ever wore a petticoat. In spite of such demonstrations, and Bishop Burnet's objurgations to boot, she will not the less continue to be the idol of popular tradition, her very name provocative of a smile, and of power to disarm the austerity of virtue, and discountenance the gravity of wisdom. It is worth while to inquire in what consists that strange fascination, which, after the lapse of a century and a half, still hangs round the memory of this singular woman. Why is her name still familiar and dear in the mouths of the people?* why hath no man condemned her? why has satire spared her? why is there in her remembrance a charm so far beyond, and so different from mere celebrity? Other women have become famous and interesting in spite of their lapses from virtue, and some from that very cause. Rosamond Clifford is the

* The head of Nell Gwynn was a popular sign in her own days, and long after; and is still to be seen over an old ale-house in Chelsea. Signs are seldom other than acknowledgments of a general good-will in the public for the thing or person signified.—C. L.

heroine of romance; Agnes Sorel, of history and chivalry; Jane Shore, of tragedy; La Vallière, of sentiment and poetry; and Gabrielle d'Estrées has been immortalized by the love of a hero, to whom she was most faithless, and of whom she was most unworthy. But Nell Gywnn—Heaven knows—had little to do with romance, or tragedy,* or chivalry, or sentiment: and her connexion with the King, with all the scandal it gave rise to, would have made her, as in other cases, a mark for popular hatred and scurrility, but for those redeeming qualities which "turned dispraise to praise," and made

"Both faults and graces loved of more and less."

A sprinkling of hypocrisy, or a few cooling drops of discretion, had rendered Nell Gwynn either far better or far worse, and placed her on a par with the women around her; as it was, she resembled nothing but herself. She may, perhaps, be compared, in some few points, with her fair and famed contemporary, Ninon de l'Enclos. Both had talents, wit, vivacity, and much goodness of heart; both were distinguished for the sincerity and permanency of their friendships, their extensive charity and munificence to literary men: what Ninon was to Racine and Molière, Nell was to Dryden and Lee. But there is this difference,—that Ninon, with all her advantages of birth, talents, independent fortune, and an education, not only *soigné*, but learned, became from choice, or perverted principle, what Nell, poor, uneducated, and unprotected, became from necessity or accident.

* Except on the stage—and then she was "out of her calling."

A woman, when she has once stepped astray, seldom pauses in her downward career till "guilt grows fate, that was but choice before," and far more seldom rises out of that debasement of person and mind, except by some violent transition of feeling, some revulsion of passion leading to the opposite extreme. In the case of Nell Gwynn the contrary was remarkable. As years passed on, as habit grew, and temptation and opportunity increased, her conduct became more circumspect, and her character more elevated. The course of her life, which had begun in the puddle and sink of obscurity and profligacy, as it flowed, refined. For the humorous and scandalous stories of which she is the subject, some excuse may be found in her plebeian education, and the coarseness of the age in which she lived: when ladies of quality gambled and swore, what could be expected from the orange-girl? But though her language and manners bore to the last the taint of the tavern and the stage, hers was one of those fine natures which *could* not be corrupted; the contaminating influence of the atmosphere around her had stained the surface, but never reached the core.

These observations, which irresistibly suggested themselves, may seem misplaced, and should rather have followed than preceded her life: but it is the *character* of Nell Gwynn which lends an interest to her memoirs, though the reverse be more commonly the case. The events of her life may be related in a few words. It was marked by no romantic incidents, no signal reverses of fortune, no tragic expiation of error. It is quite

impossible to make a heroine of her, in prose or in verse.

The family of Nell Gwynn was of Welsh extraction, as may be inferred from the name: her parents were natives of Hereford, of which city one of her noble descendants was afterwards bishop,* and where, according to a local tradition, she was herself born. Other authorities state that she first saw the light in a garret in Coal-yard, Drury-lane. However this may be, it is certain that her earliest years were spent in London, and in the very lowest haunts of vulgar profligacy. While yet a mere child, she was an attendant in a tavern, where the sweetness of her voice and her sprightly address recommended her to notice. She was afterwards, still in extreme youth, servant to a fruiterer, and in this capacity employed to sell oranges at the theatres. Here her beauty and vivacity attracted the notice of Lacy the comedian, her first lover, who was soon rivalled in her good graces by Hart, the handsomest man and most accomplished actor of that day.†

* Lord James Beauclerk died Bishop of Hereford, in 1782.

† Charles Hart was the great-nephew of Shakspeare, his father William being the eldest son of the poet's sister Joan. Contemporary authors are full of eulogiums of this great actor, and allusions to his various excellencies.—See Dryden, Cibber, the *Spectator*, Fuller, and the *Roscius Anglicanus*.

Rymer says, "What Mr. Hart delivers, every one takes upon content; their eyes are prepossessed and charmed by his action, before aught of the poet's can approach their ears; and to the most wretched of characters he gives a lustre and brilliance which so dazzles the sight, that the deformities in the poetry cannot be perceived."—*Tragedies of the Last Age Considered.*

Under the successive tuition of these two admirers, both of whom were masters of their art, Nell Gwynn was prepared for the stage, for which she had a natural *penchant;* and, in 1667, we find her enrolled in the King's company of comedians, who were then acting under Killigrew's patent, at the new theatre in Drury-lane.* Before the Restoration, no woman had appeared on the English stage, the female parts being all acted by men.† The novelty and attraction of seeing beautiful

* There are the following entries in Pepys's Diary, under the year 1667, relative to Nell Gwynn :—

"To the King's house; Knipp took us all in, and brought to us Nelly, a most pretty woman, who acted the great part of Cœlia to-day, very fine, and did it pretty well: I kissed her, and so did my wife; and a mighty pretty soul she is."—Vol. ii., p. 8.

"To the King's house; and there going in, met with Knipp, and she took us up into the tiring-rooms; and to the woman's shift, where Nell was dressing herself, and was all unready, and is very pretty, prettier than I thought. But, Lord! to see how they are both painted, would make a man mad."—Vol. ii., p. 135.

"With my wife to the King's playhouse; and there saw *The Surprisall;* which did not please me to-day, the actors not pleasing me; especially Nell's acting of a serious part, which she spoils."—Vol. ii., p. 171.

† The name of the first female actress is a disputed point: it is only certain that the first part played by a woman was Desdemona; the apologetic prologue delivered upon the occasion may be found in Malone's *History of the English Stage.* Before this time, it once happened that Charles II. being in the theatre, and expressing some impatience because the play did not immediately begin, Sir William Davenant came forward and apologized in these words:—"Please your majesty, they are shaving the queen." This oft-told jest does not seem to have been well understood by those who have repeated it. It had a double allusion, which made it doubly *piquant;* for it was just at the time that Queen Catherine's *barber* had arrived from Portugal, whose office caused much wonder and amusement among the courtiers.

women in such characters as Desdemona, Ophelia, Aspasia, &c., was undoubtedly one cause of that mania for theatrical amusements, which was one of the characteristics of the time. Nell Gwynn at once became popular in her new vocation. She was so great a favourite, that the public endured and even applauded her in characters for which her talents were altogether unfitted; as Valeria in the *Royal Martyr*, Alicia in the *Black Prince*, and Cidaria in the *Indian Emperor*, which her admirer Pepys allows that she played "most basely;"* she also appeared as Queen Elizabeth in the *Earl of Essex*. Nell Gwynn in Queen Elizabeth must have been rare,—something like Polonius "enacting Julius Cæsar in the Capitol." But, on the other hand, she excelled in comedy, and in all parts in which dancing and singing were requisite. The character of Florimel in the *Maiden Queen* appears to have been her *chef-d'œuvre* in this style. Her easy gracefulness of address, arch expression, and musical voice, rendered her unrivalled as a speaker of prologues and epilogues: several of Dryden's best, and it is well known that he excelled in these productions, were written expressly for her. For instance, the prologue to *Aurengzebe*, and the ludicrous epilogue to *Tyrannic Love*, in which, after stabbing herself most heroically in the part of Valeria, and the mutes appear in conclusion to

* To the King's house, and there saw *The Mad Couple*, which is but an ordinary play; but only Nell's and Hart's mad parts are most excellent done, but especially hers: which makes it a miracle to me to think how ill she do any serious part, as the other day, just like a fool or changeling: and, in a mad part, do beyond all imitation almost. —Vol. ii., p. 171.

carry off the dead, she gives the bearer a box on the ear and jumps up, exclaiming,—

> " Hold! are you mad? you d—d confounded dog!
> I am to rise and speak the epilogue!"

In this epilogue, Dryden, who, with all his admiration for Nell Gwynn, was aware of her unfitness for the part she acted, puts into her mouth a kind of confession of her own deficiencies:—

> " I am the ghost of poor departed Nelly;
> * * * *
> To tell you truth, I walk because I die
> *Out of my calling*—in a tragedy!"

And the concluding lines contain an allusion to one of her personal characteristics,—the extreme negligence of her dress:—

> " As for my epitaph, when I am gone,
> I'll trust no poet, but will write my own:
> 'Here Nelly lies, who, tho' she lived a slattern,
> Yet died a princess, acting in St. Catherine!' "

The same year that Nell Gwynn first appeared on the stage, she attracted the notice of the witty Lord Buckhurst, (afterwards the Earl of Dorset,) who took her from the theatre, and allowed her £100. a-year.*

* Pepys, vol. ii., p. 92, 4to. edit.—" Mr. Pierce tells us, what troubles me, that my Lord Buckhurst has got Nell away from the King's house, and gives her 100*l.* a-year, so as she hath sent her parts to the house, and will act no more." And the following entry a few days after. " To Epsum, and hear that my Lord Buckhurst and Nelly are lodged at the next house, and Sir Charles Sedley with them; and keep a merry house. Poor girl! I pity her; but more the loss of her at the King's house."

" To the King's playhouse, and there saw *The Indian Emperour:*

The absence, however, was not long: she returned to the stage in 1668, and appeared in her great character of Almahide, in Dryden's *Conquest of Granada.* In spite of what Pepys says of her acting serious parts vilely, (which was true, in general,) she produced a great effect in this character, as is evident from the extraordinary success of the play, and the allusion to her, long afterwards, by Lord Lansdown, in his *Progress of Beauty:*—

"And Almahide, once more by kings adored."

The prologue to this tragedy was written for her by Dryden.* It seems that Nokes, the favourite buffoon of the rival theatre, (the duke's house,) had lately drawn crowds, by appearing in a huge broad-brimmed hat, though where the jest lay it is impossible to guess. Dryden ridiculed this extravagance, by causing Nell to appear in a hat double the size, with brims as wide as a cart-wheel: her slight short figure, just visible under this vast overhanging circumference, and the archness with which she delivered the satirical address, were irresistibly droll, and produced all the effect expected; and much

where I find Nell come again, which I am glad of; but was most infinitely displeased with her being put to act the Emperour's daughter, which is a great and serious part, which she does most basely."—Vol. ii., p. 112.

"Nelly and Beck Marshall falling out the other day, the latter called the other my Lord Buckhurst's mistress. Nell answered her, 'I am but one man's mistress, though I was brought up in a tavern to fill strong waters to gentlemen; and you are mistress to three or four, though a Presbyter's praying daughter!'"—Vol. ii., p. 149.

* See his works for this Prologue, "To be spoken by Mistress Ellen Gwynn, in a broad-brimmed hat and waist belt."—*Scott's Edition of Dryden*, vol. iii.

more, if the tradition be true, that it was in this grotesque costume Nell first captivated her royal lover: but there is reason to doubt it.* All that can be ascertained is, that from this time the King openly distinguished her; and after the first performance went behind the scenes, and took her away in his carriage to sup with him. Soon after, Lord Buckhurst resigned her for the consideration of an earldom and a pension.†

After this elevation (as the contemporary writers express it, and, no doubt, very sincerely thought it,) we find Nelly dignified in the play-bills with the title of "Madam Ellen," by which name she was popularly known. She appeared on the stage once or twice after the birth of her eldest son, but retired from it altogether in 1671. About this time she was created one of the ladies of the Queen's privy-chamber, under which title she was lodged in Whitehall.‡ Madam Ellen lost none of her popularity by her "elevation." She carried with her into the court

* See Pepys' Diary, vol. ii., p. 179.

† Others say that Dorset himself introduced her at court, to shake the influence of the Duchess of Cleveland.

‡ Pegge's Curialia, p. 58. This was too disgraceful, but the disgrace rests with Charles who offered, and the Queen who endured the outrage, rather than upon Nell Gwynn, who certainly never sought the dignity. It is illustrative of the morals of the time, that a female writer, in the Dedication of a Comedy to Mistress Ellen Gwynn, chooses her principal topic of compliment from the connexion of that lady with majesty; and congratulates her upon the children born from that union, as peculiar blessings sent down from Heaven upon the mother and the kingdom. "Nor can Heaven give you more, who has expressed a particular care of you in every way, and above all in the bestowing on the world and you two noble branches, who have all the greatness and sweetness of their

the careless assurance of her stage manners; and, as Burnet says, continued "to *hang on* her clothes with the same slovenly negligence;" but she likewise carried there qualities even more rare in a court than coarse manners and negligent attire,—the same frolic gaiety, the same ingenuous nature, and the same kind and cordial benevolence, which had rendered her adored among her comrades. Her wit was as natural, and as peculiar to herself, as the perfume to the flower. She seems to have been, as the Duchess de Chaulnes expressed it, "femme d'esprit, par la grace de Dieu." Her bon-mots fell from her lips with such an unpremeditated felicity of expression, and her turn of humour was so perfectly original, that though it occasionally verged upon extravagance and vulgarity, even her maddest flights became her; "as if," says one of her cotemporaries, "she alone had the patent from heaven to engross all hearts." Burnet calls her "the wildest and indiscreetest creature that ever was in a court;" and speaking of the King's constant

royal and beautiful stock," &c. &c. Indeed, some passages in this extraordinary address come so near to blasphemy, that a mind, not overtinctured with piety, must recoil from the repetition of them. "So excellent and perfect a creature as yourself, differs only from the Divine Powers in this," &c.; and again, "When you [that is Nelly!!] speak, men crowd to listen with that awful reverence as to holy oracles, or divine prophecies." It is charitable to hope, that by 'Divine Powers,' the authoress insinuated nothing beyond the Paphian deities; and by 'oracles and prophecies,' meant only the responses of the Priestess of Cytherea. We turn with pleasure to the social qualities of this divinity, which have never been disputed, and are prettily touched upon in another part of this dedication. "You never appear, but you glad the hearts of all that have the happy fortune to see you, as if you were made on purpose to put the whole world into good-humour.'"

attachment to her, he adds, "but, after all, he never treated her with the *decencies* of a mistress." This last observation of the good bishop is certainly "twisted into a phrase of some obscurity:" the truth is, that Nell had a natural turn for goodness, which survived all her excesses; she was wild and extravagant, but not rapacious or selfish,—frail, not vicious; she never meddled with politics, nor made herself the tool of ambitious courtiers. At the time that the King's mistresses were everywhere execrated for their avarice and arrogance, it was remarked that Nell Gwynn never asked any thing for herself, never gave herself unbecoming airs, as if she deemed her unhappy situation a subject of pride: there is not a single instance of her using her influence over Charles for any unworthy purpose; but, on the contrary, the presents which the King's love or bounty lavished upon her, she gave and spent freely; and misfortune, deserved or undeserved, never approached her in vain. Once, as she was driving up Ludgate-hill, she saw a poor clergyman in the hands of the sheriff's officers, and struck with compassion, she alighted from her carriage, inquired into the circumstances of his arrest, and paid his debt on the spot; and finding, on application to the vouchers he had named, that his character was as unexceptionable as his misfortunes were real, she generously befriended him and his family. The plan of that fine institution, Chelsea Hospital, would probably never have been completed, at least in the reign of Charles, but for the persevering and benevolent enthusiasm of this woman, who never let the King rest till it was carried into execution.

These, and many other instances of her kind nature, endeared her to the populace. On one occasion, a superb service of plate, which had been ordered for the Duchess of Portsmouth, was exhibited in the shop of a certain goldsmith, and the common people crowded round the window to gaze. On learning for whom it was intended, they broke out into execrations and abuse, wishing the silver melted and poured down her throat, and loudly exclaiming, that "it had been much better bestowed upon Madam Ellen."

Strange as it may seem, Nell piqued herself upon her orthodox principles and her reverence for the clergy, partly from a sincere religious feeling which had been early and unaccountably impressed on her mind, and never left her; and partly, perhaps, out of opposition to the Papist favourite, the Duchess of Portsmouth. Madame de Sévigné gives in one of her letters so piquant a description of Nell Gwynn and her merry impertinence to her rival, that instead of referring to the volume, I give the passage at length.

"Kéroualle" (the Duchess of Portsmouth) "n'a été trompée sur rien. Elle avoit envie d'être la maîtresse du roi; elle l'est.... Elle a un fils qui vient d'être reconnu, et à qui on a donné deux duchés. Elle amasse des trésors, et se fait aimer et réspecter de qui elle peut; mais elle n'avoit pas prévu trouver en chemin, une jeune comédienne, dont le roi est ensorcelé. Elle n'a pas le pouvoir de l'en détacher un moment. La comédienne est aussi fière que la Duchesse de Portsmouth: elle la

morgue, lui dérobe souvent le roi, et se vante de ses préférences. Elle est jeune, folle, hardie, débauchée, et plaisante : elle chante, elle danse, et fait son métier de bonne foi : elle a un fils ; elle veut qu'il soit reconnu. Voici son raisonnement : 'Cette demoiselle,' dit elle, 'fait la personne de qualité. Elle dit, que tout est son parent en France. Dès qu'il meurt quelque grand, elle prend le deuil. Hé bien ! puisqu'elle est de si grande qualité, pourquoi s'est elle faite . . . . . ? Elle devroit mourir de honte. Pour moi, c'est mon métier ; je ne me pique pas d'autre chose. Le roi m'entretient ; je ne suis qu'à lui présentment. J'en ai un fils, je prétends qu'il doit être reconnu ; et il le reconnoîtra, car il m'aime autant que sa Portsmouth.' "—" Cette créature," continues Madame de Sévigné, " tient le haut du pavé, et décontenance et embarrasse extraordinairement la duchesse."

Besides her apartment in Whitehall, in quality of lady of the Queen's privy-chamber, Nell Gwynn had lodgings in Pall Mall,* where she frequently entertained the King and a few of his chosen companions with *petits soupers* and select concerts. On one of these occasions she had collected together some new and excellent performers, and the King was so much enchanted, that he expressed his approbation in strong terms. " Then, sir," said Nell, holding out her hand, " to show that you do not speak merely as a courtier, let me have the pleasure

* At the left hand corner of St. James's-square : the walls of the back room on the ground-floor were (within memory) entirely of looking-glass, as was said to have been the ceiling.—*Pennant's London*, p. 90.

of presenting these poor people with a gratuity from your majesty!" The King, feeling in his pocket, declared he had no money, and turning to the Duke of York, asked him if he had any? The duke replied, "No, sir, I believe not above a guinea or two." Nell, shaking her head, with her *petit air malin*, and drolly mimicking the King's tone and habitual expression, exclaimed, "Odds fish! what company have I got into here!"

Cibber, who relates this anecdote, and lived about the same time, tells us that Nell was never known to have been unfaithful to the King, from the moment he first noticed her, and that she was "as much distinguished for her personal attachment to him, as her rivals were by their titles and grandeur." Her disinterested affection, her sprightly humour, her inexhaustible powers of entertainment, and constant desire to please, must have formed an agreeable contrast to the rapacity, ill temper, affectation, and arrogant caprices of the other court ladies. Charles, in spite of every attempt made to detach him from her, loved her to the last, and his last thought was for her:—"Let not poor Nelly starve!" Burnet, who records this dying speech, is piously scandalized that the King should have thought of such "a creature" in such a moment; but some will consider it with more mercy, as one among the few traits which redeem the sensual and worthless Charles from utter contempt.

After the King's death, Nell Gwynn continued to

reside in Pall Mall, where she lived on a small pension and some presents the King had made her. She survived him about seven years, conducting herself with the strictest decorum, and spending her time in devotion, and her small allowance in acts of beneficence: she died in 1691. Dr. Tennison, then Vicar of St. Martin's, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, preached her funeral sermon, in which he enlarged upon her benevolent qualities, her sincere penitence, and exemplary end. When this was afterwards mentioned to Queen Mary, in the hope that it would injure him in her estimation, and be a bar to his preferment, "And what then?" answered she hastily; "I have heard as much: it is a sign that the poor unfortunate woman died penitent; for if I can read a man's heart through his looks, had she not made a pious and Christian end, the doctor could never have been induced to speak well of her!"

Nell Gwynn was possessed of little at her death, and that little was by her will distributed in charity. She left, among other bequests, a small sum yearly to the ringers of the church of St. Martin, where she was buried, which donation they still enjoy.

She bore the King two sons, Charles and James Beauclerc. Charles Beauclerc, her eldest son, was born in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1670, a short time before his mother quitted the stage. The occasion of his being titled and acknowledged, is too characteristic to be omitted. When the children of the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth had been dignified with titles,

orders, and offices, Nell Gwynn naturally felt piqued that *her* sons, whose filial claims upon his majesty, as the fountain of honour, were *at least* as well founded, should be passed over, and she took her own whimsical method of hinting her wishes to the King. One day, when his majesty was present, and her eldest son was playing in the room, she called to him aloud, in a petulant tone, "Come here, you little bastard!" The King, much shocked, reproved her: she replied meekly, and with the most demure simplicity, that "indeed she was very sorry, but had no better name to give him, poor boy!"

A few days afterwards, this nameless young gentleman was created Baron of Heddington and Earl of Burford; and in 1683, DUKE OF St. ALBANS, Registrar of the High Court of Chancery, and Grand Falconer of England. He inherited his mother's personal beauty, and served with great bravery under King William.* This first Duke of St. Albans married Lady Diana Vere, sole daughter of Aubrey de Vere, twentieth and last Earl of Oxford, and the greatest heiress in rank and descent in the three kingdoms.† She was very young at the period of her marriage, and as amiable and innocent as lovely. She was the mother of eight sons, of whom Lord Vere Beauclerc, (ancestor of the present

* ["He is a gentleman every way *de bon naturel*, well-bred, doth not love business; is well affected to the constitution of this country. He is of a black complexion, not so tall as the Duke of Northumberland, yet very like King Charles."—*Spring Macky.*—ED.]

† Her picture, by Kneller, is among the Beauties at Hampton Court.

duke,) was distinguished as a naval commander; and Lord Sidney Beauclerc was the father of that Topham Beauclerc, who was the friend of Dr. Johnson, and one of the worthies of Boswell. The present Duke of St. Albans is the fifth in descent from Nell Gwynn.

Her younger son, Lord James Beauclerc, died in his childhood at Paris.

The secret of Nell Gwynn's popularity seems to have consisted in what is usually called *heart*, in a kindness and candour of disposition which the errors and abject miseries of her youth could not harden, nor her acquaintance with a corrupt court entirely vitiate. On comparing and combining the scattered traits and personal allusions found in contemporary writers, it appears that she was in person considerably below the middle size, but formed with perfect elegance; the contour of her face was round, her features delicate, her eyes bright and intelligent, but so small as to be almost concealed when she laughed; her cheek was usually dimpled with smiles, and her countenance radiant with hilarity, but when at rest it was soft and even pensive in its expression; her voice was sweet and well modulated; her hair glossy, abundant, and of a light auburn; her hands were singularly small and beautiful, and her pretty foot so very diminutive, as to afford occasion for mirth as well as admiration.

The engraved portrait is after a picture by Sir Peter Lely, in the possession of General Grosvenor: it agrees

perfectly with the foregoing description, and there can exist no doubt of its authenticity The dress is certainly in the extreme of that negligence for which the lady was remarkable;

"Robes loosely flowing—hair as free."

Her left hand rests upon a lamb which she crowns with flowers. The turn of the neck and the air of the head are full of grace and character; and the whole picture, though a little injured by time, is exquisitely painted.

[Mrs. Jameson has said enough to make her readers suppose that there were versions of the youthful history of Nell Gwynn which differed much from the one she has given. It would, indeed, have been strange had not the love of scandal, and even curiosity and less culpable feelings, been employed, not only in raking up, but in inventing, anecdotes relating to the obscure beginnings of one who had gained so great a notoriety. As far as regards Nelly, or her contemporaries in the same class, the bad feelings are long ago laid asleep and forgotten; but with many of our readers one at least, that of curiosity, may still live, and for its gratification we will trace briefly one of the stories that were sent afloat of her birth and first introduction to the world. It will easily be seen, that the object of the person who wrote it was to make her birth appear as respectable as possible.

She was the daughter, (this story tells us,) of a trades-

man in mean circumstances, who early implanted in her mind a great sense of virtue and delicacy, the former of which she was not long in parting with, and yet without the misfortune of losing the latter. She no sooner became conscious of her own charms, than she solicited her father to permit her to go into the world under the protection of a lady, where she imagined that her beauty would soon raise admirers; and by having an opportunity of a more unrestrained manner, she was not without hopes of making her fortune at the expense of some visitor of the lady in whose house she was to live as a companion. She soon attracted the admiration of a celebrated lawyer, "from whom a family now flourishing in the world is descended;" and he began to conceive a violent passion for her, and his hopes of success were inflamed from the frequent opportunities he had of conversing with, and the degree of her station, which he imagined would expose her to the temptation of accepting presents and money as the price of her virtue. We are told that the lady had a penchant for this handsome lawyer; and that when she perceived his attentions to Nell Gwynn, she from that moment conceived an aversion to Nell, and in a few days turned her out of her house.

Nell Gwynn, thus reduced, was coldly received by her father, who had already been prejudiced against her by her mistress. He threatened to abandon her for ever, if she did not consent to go into Yorkshire, and live with her aunt, who was the wife of a parish-clerk in the little village of ——. Nell would not listen to this proposal,

and cast her eye upon the stage. She left her father's house, took a private lodging, and as her appearance was elegant, she passed for a young lady just come up from the country. In this retirement she applied herself to reading plays, and having a little money which her mistress had given her, and ten guineas which the lawyer had made her a present of, she went very often to the theatre, to study the acting of the different performers then in vogue. After living a month or two in this manner, she wrote a letter to Betterton, inviting him to her lodgings, there disclosed her scheme of coming on the stage, and desired he would give his opinion of her powers in recitation. He told her plainly that she was not then fit for the stage, though she seemed to have a genius that way, and advised her to seek some other mode of livelihood. Her scheme being so far defeated, and her money diminishing apace, she began to be alarmed lest poverty should overtake her; and resolved to quit her apartments, and to try and introduce herself at the theatre by dressing herself in the garb of an orange-girl.

Her plan, it seems, answered better than might have been expected. No sooner had she appeared in the pit and behind the scenes with her oranges, than the eyes of the actors, and the young wits and men of fashion who frequented the theatres, were fixed upon her, all anxious to know the story and birth of the handsome orange-girl. Betterton, who soon knew her in her disguise, seemed astonished at her resolution, and began to form great expectations from one, whose propensity to the

stage was so violent, as to induce her to appear in so low a character for the sake of acquiring instruction.

An actor prevailed upon her to quit her profession of orange-selling, and offered to share his salary with her; and she accepted his proposal, and lived with him in easy tranquillity for some time. She afterwards left him, and lived with her former acquaintance, the lawyer.

According to the story we are now following, Nell passed through several hands before she attracted the attention of the King; but the history of all her intrigues has no claim to a place in our pages. Suffice it to say, that one of her possessors is said to have been the notorious Rochester; and that when kept by him, she is said to have made her first attempt to patronise the poet Dryden, who, as a writer, was the object of Rochester's peculiar jealousy. "She had heard one day at the play, that Dryden was in distress, on account of a tragedy he had offered to the stage being, from some capricious considerations of the Lord Chamberlain, rejected. She mentioned this circumstance to Rochester, and begged him to interpose his interest to have the objection removed, and the play brought upon the stage; but in this suit she was unsuccessful. So far from complying with it, he stirred himself to have Dryden discarded at court, and recommended an obscure individual of the name of Crown, to write a masque to be represented before their majesties."

A long story is told of the manner in which Nell

Gwynn left Rochester, and of the revenge taken by the latter in his writings. She was now the mistress, if we believe this story, of a brother of the "Duchess of Cleveland," who enjoyed some share of the King's favour, but from whose eyes he studiously concealed Nell Gwynn.

"One day however, in spite of his caution, his majesty saw her, and that very night possessed her. Her lover carried her to the play, at a time when he had not the least suspicion of his majesty's being there; but as that monarch had an aversion to his robes of royalty, and was incumbered with the dignity of his state, he chose frequently to throw off the load of kingship, and consider himself as a private gentleman.

"Upon this occasion he came to the play, *incog.*, and sat in the next box to Nell and her lover. As soon as the play was finished, his majesty, with the Duke of York, the young nobleman, and Nell, retired to a tavern together, where they regaled themselves over a bottle; and the King showed such civilities to Nell, that she began to understand the meaning of his gallantry.

"The tavern-keeper was entirely ignorant of the quality of the company; and it was remarkable, that when the reckoning came to be paid, his majesty, upon searching his pockets, found that he had not money enough about him to discharge it, and asked the sum of his brother, who was in the same situation: upon which Nell observed, that she had got into the poorest company that ever she was in at a tavern. The reckoning

was paid by the young nobleman, who that night parted both with his money and mistress. Such were the gradations by which this celebrated courtesan rose to the eminence of an imperial mistress: and in that situation it must be owned, of all this prince's favourites, she was both the most prolific and the least offensive to the jarring interests of the court or country. She observed an evenness of conduct, and behaved with so much mildness, that none were her enemies who were friends to the King, and none ever libelled her, but the malevolent Lord Rochester."

Many stories are told of Nell Gwynn's charity and goodness of heart. Her benevolent exertions in behalf of the neglected author of *Hudibras*, were equally unsuccessful with the King, as with his minister Buckingham. She was not always, however, disappointed in her charitable intentions. One day, when she was "rolling about town in her coach," a poor wretch solicited charity at her coach-door, representing himself as an old soldier who had been disabled in the civil wars, while fighting in the royal cause. The heart of Nell Gwynn was touched by his distress; she hurried to lay his griefs before the King, and from this circumstance, we are told, arose her zeal for the establishment of Chelsea Hospital.

One day, when he had been struggling in the council, and torn to pieces by the multiplicity of petitions presented to him for redress, the outrageous behaviour of the ministers, and the fierce contentions of parliament,

he retired into Nell's apartment very pensive, and seemed quite broken under the influence of grief: she took the liberty to ask his majesty the cause of his disorder. "O Nell!" says he, "what shall I do to please the people of England? I am torn to pieces by their clamours." "If it please your majesty," says she, "there is but one way left, which expedient I am afraid it will be difficult to persuade you to embrace."—"What is that," says his majesty, in a tone that denoted curiosity. "Dismiss your ladies, may it please your majesty, and mind your business: the people of England will soon be pleased."

We are tempted to add, from the same source which has furnished us with the foregoing version of her history, another anecdote of Nell's mode of drawing the King's attention to his own affairs. That she often exerted herself to effect this object, seems certain; though she might be partly influenced by opposition to the other royal mistresses, whose exertions had quite another aim.

"One day, when the council had met and waited long for his majesty's appearance, one of the lords came to the apartment of the King, but was refused admittance. He complained to Nell of this insufferable dilatoriness; upon which she laid a wager with the nobleman, of a hundred pounds, that, that very evening, she would fall upon a scheme that would bring him to the council. She sent for Killigrew, a character so well known in those times, that none of our readers can be ignorant of his station; and desired him to dress himself in boots,

and in every respect as if he was going a journey, and enter the King's apartment without ceremony. Killigrew immediately engaged into her scheme, equipped himself, and entered the apartment. As soon as his majesty saw him, 'What, Killigrew! are you mad? Why, where are you going? Did I not order that nobody should disturb me?'—'I don't mind your orders, not I,' says Killigrew; 'and I am going as fast as I can.'—'Why where,' says his majesty, 'where are you going?'—'Going? why to hell,' says Killigrew. 'To hell? and what to do there?' says his majesty. 'To fetch up Oliver Cromwell from thence,' says he, 'to take some care of the national concerns; for I am sure your majesty takes none.'

"This expedient, concerted by Nell Gwynn and executed by Killigrew, had the desired effect; for he immediately went to the council, and, as long as he could bear the badges of royalty, continued with them."

Another story, given by the same writer, is highly characteristic of our heroine. One day she was driving in her coach to Whitehall. Her coachman refused to give way to another coach, in which was a lady of quality. High words soon arose between the two coachmen, and the other refused to give way, because, he said, he had himself the honour to be driving a countess, whilst his lady was neither more nor less than a ——, applying to his mistress a very offensive term. The indignant coachman jumped from his seat, and administered to the offender a severe beating. When Nell

Gwynn inquired the cause of the quarrel, and her coach man repeated to her the offensive expression which had stirred up his choler, "Go, you blockhead!" said she, "never fight again in such a cause, nor risk your carcass but in defence of truth." The King laughed heartily, when he heard the story, and complied with the lady's request, when she desired a place for her coachman. —Ed.]

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
MAURICE, CLARK, AND CO., HOWFORD BUILDINGS,
FENCHURCH STREET.

A FINE IS INCURRED IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW.

4 197.	3A 77543